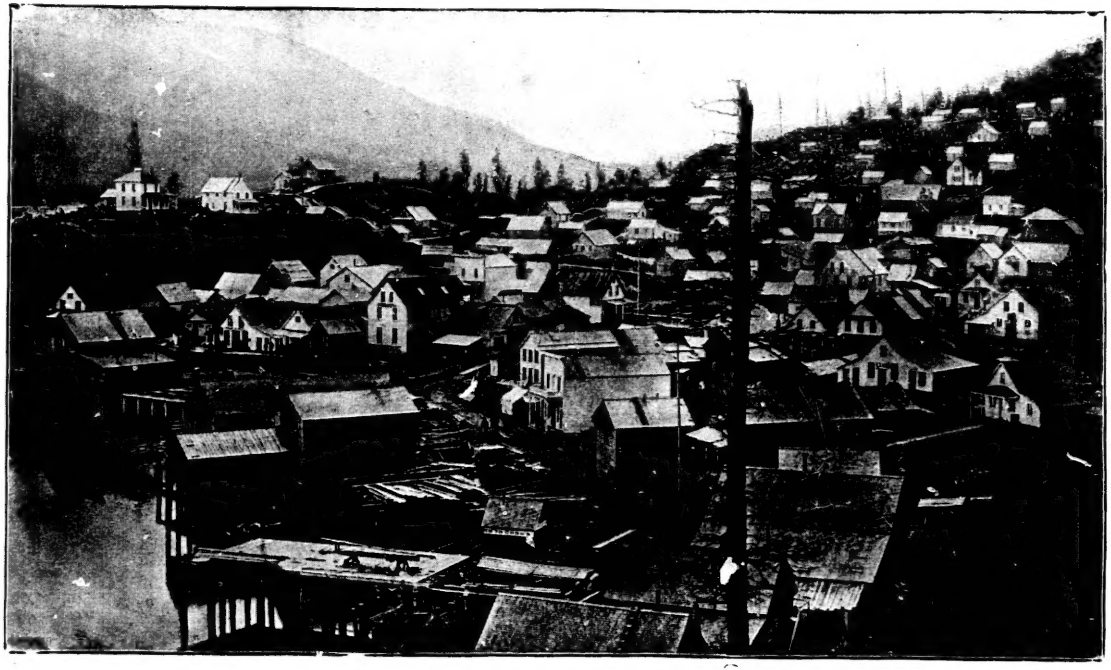

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AN

# ALASKAN STORY

BY

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
New York [illegible] Toronto
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

# KIN-DA-SHON'S WIFE

AN

# ALASKAN STORY

BY

MRS. EUGENE S. WILLARD

*Author of "Life in Alaska"*

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*FOURTH EDITION.*

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

*Publishers of Evangelical Literature*

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—BY—

EUGENE S. WILLARD.

Dedicated

TO

THE LITTLE MISSIONARIES

WHO HAVE BEEN SENT WITH

GOD'S MESSAGE

TO

OUR HEARTS AND OUR HOME.

[illegible]

# Preface to Fourth Edition.

We are all children enough to ask, "Is it true?" and to enjoy having "Yes," for answer; so I wish to say very frankly that the main incidents in Kin-da-shon's story are as he gave them to us, and Kin-da-shon himself has been pictured as we knew him — gentle, strong, patient, conscientious, and affectionate. He has passed away since the writing of this story.

The other characters have also been drawn from life, though seldom from one life alone; and the scenes and incidents have had their counterparts in the real life of the Chilkat people, and are true to its conditions.

"A Bit of History"—*that is photographed*, without retouching.

For "The Trip to Fort Simpson" the author is indebted for much of the data to Dr. Sheldon Jackson's account of his canoe trip with a party of native traders, as given in his book "Alaska," chapter 9. Much of that which made it possible to give in familiar detail the Chilkats' side of the story was gleaned from themselves, as, in the course of years, one and another has spoken with gratitude or amusement of the experiences of that never-to-be-forgotten trip.

It was Dr. Jackson who, in response to the pleadings of these Chilkats, promised to do what he could to send them a missionary. As a result of this promise, and with his prompt and well-directed aid, we established, in 1881, the mission since called Haines, on Portage Bay. Nor

has there been, I believe, from the first, a mission started, a school opened, or a teacher sent, that has not been due to the consecrated energy of this true apostle to Alaska, whose loving interest, wise counsels and substantial help continue to bless them all.

Rev. Thomas Crosby, of the Methodist Church of Canada, was the devoted missionary at Fort Simpson. The influence of his work has been far-reaching, and has blessed many tribes.

The question has been raised regarding the slaughter of slaves at the death of their master. "How long ago was such a thing possible in Alaska?" I answer, Kin-da-shon was one of the young men of our mission village, not above twenty-six years old, I would think, when he gave me the incident recorded on page 43 as one of the keenest memories of his boyhood; and I yet recall his evident anguish in picturing to me his own part in the torture of a witch, as I have tried faithfully to re-present it on page 76.

The form of marriage represented in Chapter XV. is not claimed to be the common one among the Kling-get people, but that it has been used among those of high caste in the long ago I have the word of one of our most intelligent and conscientious native Christians, whose picturesque description has been here adapted.

With these two exceptions, the customs as shown in this book are *present* customs, save as they are being displaced by the influence of Christianity or more secretly observed through fear of the white man's law.

In kindly criticism, a prominent ethnologist has cited the fact that *Indians*, in an untutored state, never *kiss*. The author replies that it was with a knowledge of this fact, and for the express purpose of showing one of the distinctions between the Alaskan and the Indian, that this

reference (page 31) was introduced. On first coming into the country, I asked an interpreter from one of the more Southern tribes for the Kling-get word for kiss. The shame-faced answer was: "We never do it; there is no name." I then watched for it, and discovered, among those quite remote from white influence and example, among those who never before had seen a white woman or child, that there were both fathers and mothers who fondled and kissed their little ones, and who named it *without* shame, assuring me that it was one of their most ancient customs.

It is pleasant to note in this connection another characteristic of the South-eastern Alaskans, i. e., the equality of the sexes. Only in matters of reparation for physical injuries is a man worth two women of his own caste. In other respects she is the favored one. She is not a drudge, or the burden-bearer of the family, but she carries cheerfully her share of its responsibilities. As indicated by her name, "sha" (which is the Kling-get word for "woman," "head," and "mountain"), she is recognized as the head of the family, and is constantly appealed to by her husband for advice or approval in his business transactions.

The writing of this story is not the result of an ambition on the part of the writer to be known as a novelist: let me speak of how and why it was written.

Two hundred and fifty miles lay between the farthermost Protestant mission of Alaska and the country of the Chilkats beyond, when we went to carry to them the "good news," and to make our home among them.

A white trader with his native wife had preceded us by several months; with this single exception, we were the only whites in the country.

The Chilkats were the master tribe among the Kling-gets, holding themselves aloof from their "poor relations,"

and priding themselves on their rank and their adherence to old customs. They were regarded with awe and fear by the other tribes.

Our association with the people was peculiarly close, as minister, teacher, physician, and friend, and gave us unequaled opportunities for not only seeing their customs and hearing their traditions, but, gradually, as we came to understand their language, to know the people themselves in heart and thought by their confided life-stories and experiences.

During those early days we fully realized that great changes awaited this people—changes to be accomplished not only by the gospel, but by the inevitable contact of incoming civilization with its various blessings and cursings. We knew that these changes must come soon, and that the new generation would be ignorant of the original beliefs and manners of their fathers. Knowing, too, that the transitional period must necessarily be, to a large extent, one of demoralization, we longed to put on record our knowledge of what they had been—the better and the worse—and so preserve for our children, both white and brown, something of the old time. With such an object, the writing of this story was begun. Time for it could be taken only after the long, busy day among the people; 'twas then that something was written of that which we had heard or seen.

But after a time the slowly growing manuscript was laid aside, and for nearly eight years it was untouched; then other reasons urged its completion.

Many of those anticipated changes have taken place. The people are both better and worse. The weakest and the worst are sneered at as the product of Christian missions—the sneer reveals the character of the sneerer. Many of the people are what they are to-day as a result

of the *devil's* missions to Alaska, prosecuted by the whiskey dealer, the license vender, the dance-house proprietor, and by men who, having forsaken the teachings of good mothers and prostituted their own God-given instincts, have, instead of making pure and happy homes with women of their own race and intelligence, taken advantage of the native custom of marriage to build a domestic structure which cannot endure and which works ruin to all concerned.

Then, too, the natural thrift of the people has been unduly stimulated in some instances into a greed for gold, though the larger number are good spenders as well as industrious laborers, and real homes—Christian homes—in houses, "just big enough for Tashekah and me," are clustering about the missions to the gradual exclusion of the big native house with its homeless inmates.

To those who have regarded the history of our Indians of the States, our "century of dishonor" is a fact to which may be traced the loss of many precious lives, the loss of untold wealth from our country's treasury, and the loss, more than equally great, of a people, powerful in character and in numbers, who *might have been* to-day the sinew of our nation as educated, christianized men and women. Every step, though so tardily taken by our government, toward bringing the Indian into an enlightened citizenship, has had its resultant blessings, and we have to-day in their rising generation many true and intelligent patriots.

Many of our early mistakes as a nation dealing with its wards—its ignorant children—have been avoided in Alaska. Twenty years was a long time to leave them without a school, without the touch of a fostering parent hand, but since these have been given the work has gone bravely on, and there are no more loyal citizens

under our flag than the hundreds of intelligent native young men and women, boys, and girls who have been trained in our Alaskan schools. May the number of such schools be greatly increased!

But against the pleasant record of beneficent law and justice for this beautiful northland of ours there must now be placed a *stain.* I refer to the recent substituting of *license* for the *prohibition* of *liquors.*

Shall our *new* century be a century of *greater* dishonor?

Shall our laws protect a traffic which brings ruin to our own race, and deeper degradations to our "new possessions" than ever they knew under the heathen superstition or the despotism from which we are so boastfully wresting them?

If *Kin-da-shon's Wife* shall help any one to see more clearly what should be done for our "little brothers and sisters," and prove any inspiration toward the doing of it, the main object in the writing of this book shall have been attained.

CARRIE M. WHITE WILLARD.

MAY, 1900.

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# KIN-DA-SHON'S WIFE.

## CHAPTER I.

### SUMMER DAYS IN THE CHILKAT COUNTRY.

'TWAS in the month of Alaska's glory—June—when, waking from her deep, white sleep, the natural world proclaimed the power of the resurrection and of life.

Eight months earlier, almost before the harsh nurse, Frost, had disrobed the flower-children of the year, Mother Nature threw about them her beautiful blanket of snow, and, tucking them cozily in, brought another and still others with which she raised a barrier secure against Winter's warfare. Ten, twelve, even twenty feet beneath the glistening surface, shut in to sleep around their mother's great house-fire, these little ones had slept well.

The sun, as if fearful of disturbing their dreams, had but occasionally peeped over the shoulder of Ut-undy-sha (Shooting Mountain) to the south, then quickly disappeared again from sight. But, as May approached, he lingered long—not over Undy-sha, but, rising from behind Sha-Gitk to the northeast, his course he slowly took around the horizon to Gā-sun in the northwest—there disappearing for only four hours of the long day. A fortnight of such shining had sufficed to awaken the sleeping world, only another had been required to clothe it in

tropical beauty. And on this bright morning the little lake of Chilkoot mirrors back from its clear face a sky warm and bright and blue, against which loom the great peaks forever ice-crowned, and from which slide invisibly the glaciers blue and cold.

Further down, blending with the golden browns and the purple of the granite, lie the tender yellows of the sheep pastures, dotted, to the trained eye, with flocks, flocks untended by earthly shepherd. Then, with almost imperceptible gradations of color, come the blue and black greens of the stunted pine and huckleberry-brush — guarded by the forests primeval, spruce, hemlock, fir, and cedar; and mingling with these their own lighter and more graceful foliage are the cottonwood, wild-apple, and the alder.

Every limb is clothed with moss, and its festoons float from pillar to pillar in this vast temple. The air is redolent with the breath of roses, as the mountain drops to the water's brink, roses as red and sweet as ever grew along the valley roadways in the dear home-land, and far more fresh and luxuriant. The sweet-pea, whose buds are just bursting, creeps *over* the brink of the lake, hiding full nests of the numberless water-fowl whose peculiar call, broken into a hundred echoes, falls again in a shower of sound and vanishes amid the solitudes. The tender notes of the robin and the blue-bird mingle with the croak of the raven and the cry of the eagle. The cinnamon bear walks fearlessly down the track of the avalanche and feeds upon the abundant trout of the noisy mountain stream.

The village lies just beyond, nestling at the foot of the great mountain range that divides this southeastern strip of Alaska from the interior, the land of the Gun-un-uh. Rushing from the lake southward is Chilkoot River; at

this point scarcely more than a saucy brook, which, held sternly on the one side by the unyielding height of rock, dashes the more impetuously over the lesser barriers and sends its white spray far up the bank and into the face of the village, laughing uproariously at its own frolicking. Passing the village, it plunges through the rapids for half a mile of loveliness, then suddenly widens and calms under the influence of the sea. The tides are exacting teachers, and soon the rollicking laughter of the brook has ceased—though far down the inlet we can trace, in the midst of the outgoing tide, the clear, fresh stream.

Soon there comes another sound—not at first distinguishable from that of the water as it trickles and drips from the rocks or rushes down the gorge—but it is as though all the sweet, low tones of nature mingled and flowed on together in rhythmic utterance. We distinguish at length the dip of a paddle and its accompanying canoe-song—low, liquid, and melodious; it *is* the water; now flowing softly, then breaking tempestuously, pierced now and again with the shriek of the sea-gulls, and falling to the beating of their wings.

The little bark advances from out the shadows of the narrow river course into the broad, full light of the lake, revealing the figures of those who sing. An old woman sits in the middle of the canoe making thread from the dry sinew of the reindeer. A girl of twelve lies curled in the prow, toying dreamily with the grass and flowers she has plucked from the banks as the canoe glided through the river—she carries the high, tenor-like soprano of the song; her brother, perhaps two years the girl's senior, with his single paddle both propelling and guiding the boat—so leisurely that we know it to be a pleasure-party—occupies the stern. He, too, is singing; and under the young voices is the crooning of the woman:

"Oh, my mother—I am sick!"
"Where, my child—is it head or foot—
The arm or the back?"
"No: my heart, my heart is sick."
"Why is it sick? What is its ailment?"
"That thou art gone—nowhere can I find thee.
Come to me—come to me.
Where art thou, O my mother?
Now e'en thy voice is lost—
Why did it mock me?
Art thou gone to the clouds or
Have the waters swallowed thee up?
Surely water enough
Flowed through our eyes
To drain dry that great river—
That thou mightest pass in safety.
Mother—mother!
Come to me—come to me!
Where art thou? My heart is sick!"

"Grannie," says the child, suddenly rousing from the dreamful silence which has followed the song, dropping her flowers into the water and trailing through it her slender fingers—"Grannie, when will our father come again to his own country? He told us he would tarry but a moon and a half, and I know I have counted twenty."

"Gah!" cries the boy; "you've counted every night a moon! My father cut the first day on my stick, and I have given it now just forty other marks—*less* one. He will bring much trade if he is not on the mountain now."

While the boy was speaking the old woman drew from her bosom a slender tape of deer-skin, on which are strung a few beads of curious design—treasures of Russia, and some from "King George's land," with other rudely carved medicine charms of green stone. In the long end

which hangs from the fastening of this necklace a number of knots have been tied, and these she begins to count:

"One, two, three—that was the day the medicine-man told of foul weather; four, five—and the storm came; six, you know how the wind howled, and Ha-nedt was beaten for bringing it—he killed a fish with a stone when it would have gotten out of his canoe again; seven, we built the great fires to appease the Spirit of the Wind, so that our men might be able to cross the mountains; eight, nine, and the red sun had turned white again, the wind was still; ten, ten and one, ten and two, ten and three," and with the recalling of many similar incidents the woman counts off the forty knots on her string. "You are right, Kasko," she says, tucking the record into her bosom again and resuming her thread-making; "maybe on the mountain he is coming now; on the morrow he may be with us."

At this the little maiden smiles and claps her hands, while the boy, whose paddle has trailed idly while they talked, now takes it up, and, with a whoop which makes the mountains ring again, drives it into the water with such sweeping force as sends the little boat bounding forward with reckless speed.

"Take a paddle, Tashekah," he cries, "and let us over the lake like an arrow." Seizing a paddle which has lain in the bottom of the canoe, the girl enters the race with as much skill as her brother, and with quite as much spirit. Their course seems indeed that of an arrow, so straight and swift it proves.

Tashekah, though slender, is not tall for her age. Her face is round and her lips and cheeks are rosy-red; the mouth is large, with full, even sets of teeth, showing very white in her frequent laugh. A silver ring, smooth and small, hangs from the little pug nose, and each ear is

similarly ornamented. Her hair, soft, glossy, and fine, hangs below her shoulders, and, in falling unrestrained, almost hides her low forehead—it is a black cloud from which shine out big eyes of wondrous lustre; and these, except when, as now, the face is filled with merriment, are full of that strange pathos and pleading which are so often seen in the eyes of these Alaskan children. Her only article of dress is a cotton "slip"—a width and a half of large-figured print, gathered into a band about the neck, and with straight, full sleeves.

Her brother is a typical native boy—tall, slender, and well formed, supple, active, and graceful. His face is decidedly of the Jewish cast, oval-shaped, with a large, strong nose, keen and laughing eyes, a good forehead, and closely cropped hair. His ornaments are more conspicuous than his dress, being the counterparts of those adorning Tashekah's nose and ears; but in addition to these he wears a necklace of small and variously colored stones, shells, and shark's teeth. The boy's dress consists solely of a blanket or robe made of squirrel-skins sewed together with the sinew thread, and this he dons or doffs at pleasure. It is his bed, his cloak, his girdle, or travelling valise, as he may choose or require.

The grandmother's garment is like that of Tashekah's; but now about her waist she has gathered an old woollen blanket. Her face is furrowed and her form much bent. The hair is slightly gray; and short, as though mourning for the dead were not long past. The face is pitched with black, and the silver pin protruding through the lower lip glistens more brightly by contrast. Two sets of rings hang in her ears, one ring above the other; and her nose ring is large. The wrinkled, bony hands have fallen to her lap now, and she pridefully watches the movements of the boy, who for a moment has dropped his paddle and

drawn his bow. A great bald eagle sinks, uncertainly, till another arrow pierces him and Tasheka has skilfully sent her boat under the fallen bird.

Six months before Tul-gā-us had died, leaving her children to the Kog-won-tons (the children of the Chilkats and of all other Kling-get people belong to their mother's tribe); but they had, since her death, continued to live on with their father, Kah-sha, who loved his children with a great and tender love.

The babe of two days had not died with its mother, and the father, yielding it to others only to be suckled, held the wee thing in his own bosom day and night. But ere long, despite his care, the feeble spark of its life went out, as he had seen it go from five other little ones before. When the babe's ashes had been gathered and laid beside its mother's and those of her other dead babes, Kah-sha had put together some bits of cotton print and a few buttons—gotten in trade with more southern tribes—and at the close of the herring season joined others of his people going into the interior to trade for furs.

The children were longing for his return, and spent the time rambling about the woods, or, as now, with their grannie on the water. This day has been beguiled with song, story-telling, and spearing fish, so that the sun has almost completed his long day's journey when they turn their faces southward, and, having entered the river, trail paddles until the current has borne them to the village. And now, leaving his robe where he sat, Kasko dives into the water, and, reappearing in a moment, draws the canoe to shore, where with Tashekah's ready help it is soon landed, overturned, and covered with the heavy grass which grows so rankly on the bank.

Following the almost hidden path, so overhung with the spring blooms, they pass the fish-traps and enter the

broader and more beaten way between the long row of native houses which face the river, and the great, close-set drying-racks on its bank, which in salmon-time become a flaming spectacle, hung as they then are with the brilliant-colored fish. Lower down, in the river itself, stand the guard-stakes of the fish gardens. Each family has its own, inherited through generations, and guarded as jealously as ever crown was held by royal heir or hunting field by the buffalo lovers of the plains. That one man had taken fish from between the stakes of another would be cause enough for bloodshed, and has more than once wrought serious mischief among the people.

The population, as usual through the summer, has turned out of doors, and the way is thronged. There are huddling groups of women—many with no other employment than that of nursing the babies in their arms and gossiping quietly with those whose busy fingers fly deftly in and out among the fine grasses of their basket-weaving. A few men lie stretched out here and there silently smoking, while the children and the dogs, playing hide-and-seek, dash about and around with laughter and clatter unrestrained, except as they too nearly approach their elders.

Our little party, with friendly, common interests, moves but slowly through the chatting crowd. Before they have reached their own house a shout goes up announcing the appearance of a canoe just making the turn in the rapids below.

Alertly the men, without removing their pipes, turn over and raise themselves upon their elbows. The women sit still, but cease their talking to look in the direction of the new-comers. Only the children, with the dogs at their heels, go yelling and yelping down to the landing-place.

Kasko, at the first cry, has flung from him every impediment, and speeds as a deer toward the stream.

## CHAPTER II.

### RETURN OF THE TRADING PARTY.

THE river Chilkat is separated from that of Chilkoot by the Chilkat country, which takes the form of a peninsula by the southward flowing together of these streams (forming Lynn Channel) twenty-five or thirty miles below Chilkoot Lake. At first the separation is wide and mountainous, but at Da-shu, or Half-trail, fifteen miles from the point, the Chilkoot shore is indented by a lovely bay, and the land drops into beautiful and fertile meadows, threaded with bright little streams and belted with dark forests. Crossing here is the trail, or portage, less than a mile from river to river, over which canoes are carried to avoid the thirty miles' journey around the point of the peninsula in passing from the eastern to the western villages.

The Chilkoot people are also Chilkats; their village lying on the west shore of Chilkoot River, while the three Chilkat villages are on the eastern shore of the broader river. These four are the permanent settlements of the Chilkat country. There are also several less substantially built places occupied at certain seasons of the year for fishing and hunting.

Each permanent village has its chiefs. The Chilkats, in common with other Kling-get tribes, are divided into two distinct families, who intermarry with each other and cannot marry among themselves; who compliment each other in feasts and fight against each other in war. In fact, the tribal family is bound together with far closer

and more rigid laws than any which protect the private domestic relation. Husbands and wives, among all Kling-get tribes, *must* be of opposite families. The children always belong to their mother's family, so that they are, by law, nothing to their father. Should the family of the father be at war with that of the mother, regardless of personal feeling the children must enter the lists against their father. Children may marry their own father's brother, or their own mother's father—they are not related by their law—but to marry one of their own tribe-family, though blood relation were untraceable, the shame would be past blotting out.

In the Chilkat country these two great families are known as the Klee-qua-hutte and the Kog-won-ton. To the former belong the clans represented by their totems, the raven, the sea-gull, and many others.

Among the Kog-won-tons are the Cinnamon Bear, Eagle, Petrel, Wolf, Whale, and so on. In each village are members of both families and of almost every clan. The northernmost settlement on the Chilkat River is Klok-won. Its chief is a Kog-won-ton, of the Bear clan. Klok-won being the largest of the four villages and its chief the richest of all the chiefs, the Bears rank highest in caste among the Chilkat people.

The village Kut-wulh-too is but two miles south of Klok-won, yet it is under the chiefs of Yhin-da-stachy, twenty miles or more to the south. From this latter place the river is followed by a trail for three or four miles, which then strikes the portage. Chilkoot River becomes the Inlet when it is joined by the Dy-yâ, at a short distance above Portage Bay. Dy-yâ is the water-front of the great interior.

Even while his children were speaking of him on the lake, Kah-sha and his companions were descending the

precipitous mountain trail at Dy-yâ's head. Very profitable had been their expedition, and their packs were large and heavy. But even now, after days of toiling through stream, forest, and snow, scaling cliff and descending gulch, where a misstep would be fatal, their burdens are borne with a certain dignity which proclaims the bearers men of spirit and of great endurance.

What if shoulders are galled—the trail is no becoming place for the mention of it.

As in single file they are coming down the pass we have an opportunity for more particular notice. The packs are made up square and tied securely with ropes made of dressed reindeer skin, of which slender strips are braided together. Into this rope are fastened the carved bone pins of the pack straps—a strap made from the hide of a young deer's shank, tanned and finished with the hair side out; it is two or three inches wide and from one and a half to two feet long, worn on the forehead to raise the burden high on the shoulders, or, corresponding to the breast strap of a harness, across the breast and over the shoulders. In this way a Chilkat man will carry the average pack of a hundred pounds every day in the week, making from six to twenty miles a day, according to the character of the trail.

There are fifteen men in the party, great stalwart fellows; and, with somewhat lighter packs, several boys from twelve to sixteen years of age, to whom this has been the initiatory of Gun-un-uh trading. One of the older lads leads the file, now that they are on familiar ground, and now and again he proudly shouts back to his companions, as the view rapidly narrows down to the little valley they are entering and he recognizes each rock and tree. It is Kin-da-shon, a high-class Raven of the village Klok-won.

Immediately following him is a young man of twenty, whose physique, even among so many of fine proportions, is striking. His mouth is smiling, but his eyes, though singularly keen and intelligent, are strangely sad in expression—Klune is deaf and dumb. He is the only son of aged Toots and his old wife, of Yhin-da-stachy. Klune is bearing the pack of his old chief Kood-wot, who is close behind him. Then follow Ka-kee, the medicine-man, Tum-tum the dwarf, and, near the latter end of the line, Kah-sha, whom his children await so eagerly.

There is a roaring of water now distinctly heard, and, with a sudden turn of the little path, they have reached the bank of the torrent. Kin-da-shon has come upon it with a bound and a whoop.

Sitting down he speedily throws himself back, slips the strap over his head, and springs upon the shoulders of Klune, who as quickly, though silently, has freed himself from his burden, and they roll together over and over on the fresh green and fragrant sward; the shouting laughter of the boy more than matched by the ludicrous antics and perfectly intelligible signs of the mute.

Very soon all the packs are on the ground, and for a few moments the older men rest upon theirs—having first lighted their pipes. No time is to be lost, as the staple food of the party—dried fish—is gone. The boys are eating with relish the wild carrots and rice abounding everywhere. The younger men busy themselves with the canoes, which have lain here in perfect security during their absence, simply turned bottom up, the paddles underneath, and, to protect them from the sun, all covered over with brush and grass.

The dress of the travellers, with the exception of the shirt, is removed for the passage through the rapids. The garment laid aside is a combination, shoes and

pantaloons in one, made from tanned deerskin, and in some cases beautifully embroidered with beads, porcupine quills, and the strong inner bark of the cedar, colored with dyes obtained from mosses, grass, ferns, and bark of different kinds. The winter shirt is similar in style and material; but this is often laid aside for one of print, or one made up of the precious pot-latch pieces of blankets torn and distributed among the guests at the feasts for the dead; and the garment is valuable according to the number and variety of pieces in its composition.

The canoes are soon filled and floated; one only is bound for Chilkoot, and Kah-sha is its experienced captain. He stands to the waist in the icy water, staying the frail boat with one hand, and in the other holding a pole ready to spring in and be off, when Kin-da-shon, hastening by him to his own canoe, throws over his head the beaded ribbon of a small embroidered leathern pouch, of Gun-un-uh work, with the whispered words, "Give it to Tashekah;" and the boat, like an arrow shot from some strong bow, is given to the current. All native instinct, of sight and touch and sound, is required for her safe piloting between the rocks and the sand-bars. Often as she grazes the sand the man is in the water and as instantly in the boat again, pole in hand, guiding her unhindered course with utmost skill and coolness among obstacles which, striking, would have proved the wrecking of his craft.

Four miles of this exciting race brings them into the smooth, broad waters of the Dy-yâ, and now sails are raised to a favoring wind, and the little fleet soon passes the sixteen miles to Chilkoot Point. Separating here, three canoes pass southward to the portage. The other moves to the north into the river with paddles at work against the rapid current.

The narrow passage is already in twilight from the close height of the mountain, when suddenly, in the clearer light just beyond, they see the village lying in its old-time quiet. And then is heard the shout of the villagers themselves, who have already discovered their approach.

## CHAPTER III.

### KAH-SHA'S HOME-ING.

THERE is a smile on the grave face of Kah-sha as he recognizes the forms of his children dancing on the bank. He does not join in the song of his companions, but the whole village answers it in a chant of welcome, and the dogs seem mad in their sympathetic demonstrations.

Already Kasko is in the water, diving and shouting. Only a few more dips of their paddles and he has seized the end of the canoe. The men spring out, and with their peculiar "Ooh-ooh—o-o-ooh!" the boat is landed clear at the top of the bank.

Words of greeting are few or wanting altogether. Not a woman moves from her place; the men, who have idly watched the landing, now as leisurely raise themselves to a sitting posture, doubling their legs under them, or, raising their knees, clasp their arms about them and continue to smoke in silence.

Between Kasko and his father not a word is spoken. The boy has dragged his father's pack from the boat, and, throwing himself down, adjusts the strap to his forehead. His attempt to rise with the burden is only successful when, unperceived by him, his father, who has looked on with affectionate pride, helps him to raise it. Then, bent almost double under its weight, the boy runs up the rude, strong steps, and in through the circular opening—the doorway of the house they call "ours." In a moment he reappears at the top of the steps, and with a single hand-spring is at his father's side. Kah-sha has already turned

to enter the house; Tashekah, with his blanket about her neck, walks beside him, thoroughly enjoying the triumphal procession. For now, eager to hear and see the home-comers, and to share in both the providing for and the eating of the generous supper, so much needed by the travellers, the crowd follows Kah-sha and his companions into the great, hospitable house.

Boys, with Kasko at their head, run for wood; and the great fire which soon blazes upon the square of earth in the centre of the house proves very grateful as the evening grows colder. Tashekah, too, goes out, but soon, as her father sits by the fire which sends ruddy light into the remotest corner of the dark old house, she comes and lays before him an armful of yan-a-ate, the delicious wild celery of Alaska. In appearance it resembles the long stems of pumpkin leaves, but when the skin is drawn, as is that of rhubarb for the table, it is tender and pleasant to the taste. With this and a few dried herring from the early spring's curing, the men stay themselves until the more substantial food shall be prepared.

The women are busy about this task. Water is brought from the river flowing by, in baskets woven so close, from the inner bark of the cedar, as to be water-tight, and in these are placed the stones which have been heating in the heart of the fire. The fish which the children brought from the lake are cut into pieces and dropped into the now boiling water of one basket, while another is used for cooking the dried fish-eggs which are such a delicacy to the native.

The eagle, of Kasko's killing, is also required. The head and talons only are removed from the feathered body. Hot ashes are then drawn out a little from the fire and the great bird is laid on this roasting bed, heaped over with a thick covering of the same material.

Long, slender roasting-sticks are whittled off afresh, run through the bodies of many dried "small-fish," and stuck into the ground against the plank floor, leaning toward the generous blaze.

At length the supper is cooked and ready to serve, and now small carved dishes of wood and bone are brought out with fish oil; carved trays for the crisply toasted dried fish are placed beside them. The fish is broken into bits, and dipped as eaten into the oil—just as children sometimes eat molasses with their bread. Then follow the boiled fish-eggs, and the fresh fish cooked to soup and served in great carved boxes—carved horn spoons with them. There is a spoon for each person, but a box for as many as can help themselves from it, as the spoons contain an ordinary plateful. The carvings on dishes and spoons represent the clans, and their intermarriages are indicated by the grotesque mingling of raven, wolf, and other totems.

After this second course comes the grand finale. The eagle is taken from his ash oven. The entrails being first removed, the feathers with the skin are turned back, exposing the white, juicy meat; and this, as a last course, is served—in the fingers!

During the supper, of which all partake with hearty zest, Tashekah has kept close beside her father—his arm encircling her as she leans against him. Often she lifts her eyes to his, and is fondly petted in answer to her look of affection.

At the close of the meal—*without* looking up—she asks in a low tone: "Were you well, my father?"

"Yes, child; why do you ask me that?"

"And did no evil touch you?"

"None that I wot of, Tashekah, none but the evil ever present with me. But say, what filled your heart with me?"

"O father!—the words are hard coming—I know not how to tell you all that has made my heart sick about you; even Kasko could not understand, and to grannie I dare tell nothing, for she frightens me more. But the people are hearing us, and I cannot speak."

The last sentence has been uttered in a whisper so low that not even those nearest them at the dish could distinguish the words.

A pair of evil eyes are on the girl; indeed, that they have been so riveted on her has been the cause of her disturbance and the abrupt close of the conversation. It is Yealh-neddy, one of the young men who have returned with her father. He is not more than twenty years old, as we count life here, but he is older than that in vice, and a gambler. Of the Ravens, he was born in the upper Chilkat village, Klok-won, but from village to village he moves about, as a buzzard follows prey. Yealh-neddy was a witness of the hurried act of young Kin-da-shon at the launching of their canoe, and, even without the whispered word which he did not catch, read more of the truth than any one else suspected.

Small matter as the preference of a child might seem, it was enough to prompt this evil nature to thwart it. His quick eye has now detected the postponement of Kah-sha's talk with his daughter, and with a coarse laugh he addresses her:

"*I* would give much for such an interview, Tashekah. Neh! but you would make a fine friend!"

The tenderness has vanished from the child's face, and her eyes are fixed upon the man with terror and a sudden hate till he has finished; then, with an expression of despairing appeal, she raises them to the face of her father.

Yealh-neddy's remark was made in so loud a voice that

its fellows are called out from not only other young men, but from fathers and mothers of other girls, seated about the fire.

Kah-sha speaks not a word, but as his eyes rest on Tashekah their sadness deepens. Kasko's anger always burns when his sister is treated with the familiarity common among the people, but to-night he restrains all expression of it, except that his face assumes a suspicious sharpness, and his tone is unnatural and peremptory as he demands rather than asks:

"Father, may I see your pack?"

As he speaks he draws it into the light of the fire, and Tashekah springs to her feet with lively interest, her shadow for a time disappearing.

"You both *will* see it, I think," the father says with an indulgent smile, and the many-knotted rope soon lies in a smooth, even coil beside him.

With the fur folded in, there are the "skins" he has traded for. The foxes, silver, black, and red; black and cinnamon bear; lynx skins and otter. Then comes a leather suit of wonderful Gun-un-uh work, and a pair of dainty beaded moccasins for Tashekah.

The pouch given him by Kin-da-shon has been concealed within the bosom of his shirt; even now he does not bring it out.

The other packs have been opened also, and the skins are passed about from hand to hand, remarked upon, criticised, and praised.

"Will you be going south to trade them?" grannie asks of Kah-sha.

"Yes, when this moon is half full," he answers.

"O father, let me go with you!" Kasko cries.

"Not this time, my son; your first trip must be with me, after this year's snows, into the Gun-un-uh country.

When you have learned to trade there, you shall go to the south people."

"But were you ever there before?"

"To the far south? yes, once; when my life was new. They were a wild, wicked people then—not as the poor Gun-un-uh are wild, but they drank a kind of medicine that gave them bodies like beasts and thoughts like devils."

"Ah, ah!" Yealh-neddy breaks in, "and they have plenty of it yet—my heart burns for it now. Crows and ravens! what dreams it gives a man! what sights it makes him see!" And the evil eyes roll, the sensual lips are smacked with the recollection of an intoxication in the past.

"Do they gamble, Neddy?" asks Tool-chun, one of the fathers who have been chaffing with the fellow.

"You might be sure he wouldn't like them so well if he hadn't got the best of them," sharply put in his angry daughter, Sha-hehe, a tall, thin girl of fifteen, who sits well back from the fire wiping some of the supper boxes and smarting still from the chaff.

"Speak when you're spoken to, will you, girl! Hold your tongue till it's wanted!" snarls her mother—a hard-faced woman made hideous by the face paint of black, streaked with red.

"What a wild-cat that girl is! Why don't you shut her up or get her married?" growls one of the household.

"She won't stay shut up, and no man with his sense in his head would have her," the woman answers.

"The raven take your sense, and give me the girl!" cries Yealh-neddy.

There are but few in the party who do not join in the laugh which follows this remark.

Sha-hehe had assumed a stubborn, downcast silence

during the talk which had passed, but as the young reprobate spoke she stood up with glowing eyes, the dish she has been wiping still in her hand, and, when the laugh has broken forth, with all the savage young might of her nature she hurls it into his face with the imprecation, "May *all-evil* take *you!*" and speeds out of the house, nor stops till, breathless and terror-stricken, she finds that in the blindness of her angry flight she has taken the path to the dead-houses.

Not daring to retrace her steps, she shrinks weakly down in the shadow she has reached. It is that of a dead medicine-man's house—where his body lies, and from which emanates the power of witchcraft.

Kasko had watched Sha-hehe with peculiar interest; for his sister's sake he hated Yealh-neddy, and as the girl had stood up in her wrath, there seemed to him a terrible grandeur in her height and loneliness. It was in watching her thus, and through the power of his sympathy, that he instinctively foresaw her violence toward Yealh-neddy, and as she raised her arm with such desperate purpose, he, with movement as swift, flung a heavy bear-skin over the ruffian's head, thus saving the face scar which would have cost Sha-hehe's life.

Instantly Yealh-neddy dashed the skin aside, and sprang to his feet as though to follow the wretched girl; then turning, with muttered curses and threats of vengeance on her, he took his blanket, drew it over his head and face—a common expression of "great shame," that is, anger—and sat back against the hewn planks of the house wall, with his ugly face between his updrawn knees.

For some time there was bedlam among the forty inmates of the dwelling. Such an affair as this was personal to every one; each had much to say and none could

wait for another, but raised voice the higher to be heard. Children were roused from their sleep by the noise and added their cries to the uproar. But gradually the storm spent itself, and at length there were preparations for the night. In most cases a single blanket or skin served for a bed and its covering.

The native house, with but few exceptions, has but the single room, the open fire in the centre of the apartment, and in this house are gathered just as many persons as it will hold. It is occupied promiscuously—adults and children of both sexes and of every age make their beds thus upon the floor, their heads against the walls and their feet all turned toward the fire. In a few instances a temporary screen may be put up by one sensitive enough to shrink and bold enough to dare.

To-night Kah-sha takes his blanket, and making it fast to his canoe-pole raises it across a small corner of the room. Into this retreat he tucks Tashekah, then placing before it the thick woolly skin of a mountain-sheep, lays himself down for the night, even more weary in mind than in body—too weary to do aught but travel again the endless way his thoughts so often take.

"How is it that the world is so full of trouble—so dark? Where is there light? What *is* light? I cannot tell. It is something which I cannot find. When a little child of my own came first to my arms I thought, 'He has come from the light—for he *brings me* some.' Then he sickened and died, almost as soon as he came—from light he fell to darkness, and *my* night was thicker than before—and more than that! into its thickness had come a *being*—seen for a little, now unseen! It mocked me—whence did this life come? Whither now has it gone? What *is* life? *Has* it gone? or where does it linger? With what wretched eagerness I flung the blankets and food on that

child's burning ashes—that, if he *should* need them as my people believe, or could get them in that way, he might have all the comfort I could give him. But what torture I have in thought! Why does it not leave me! Why should a man have eyes in a land where there is no sun! O Raven, if thou be God—but no, he is a god of evil! dwelling in pitch darkness under the earth—bearing its weight on his evil wings till that day when he shall choose to fly away croaking over its destruction—what a God! Till that great day he amuses himself with the sufferings of man. He is easily angered, and must be constantly appeased and coaxed to bear us up a little longer! Do I not believe this? Why then do I tremble with fear when the earth shakes only a little? Why do I expect evil when the medicine-priest foretells it? *Do* I believe? I cannot tell. Oh, light—light! must I die in this black gulf! Why does the sun shine but to mock me? Why do flowers grow beside the thorns and fruit among the thistles? Why do the birds sing and the waters laugh? Oh, if I could but know! What is it that sometimes comes to my heart like the blue of the morning, telling of a coming day—speaking faintly of things sweet to think of but cruel to hope for—telling me that what is sweet and beautiful in the world is the work of another spirit? That there may be somewhere, somewhere, *light*—in which flowers may blossom and birds may sing in *men's hearts?* O my Tashekah——"

"Father." The whispered call is so low that it would scarcely have disturbed the passionate revery of the man had there not accompanied it the touch of a little hand which has found its way out to him under the blanket screen. Kah-sha holds it for a moment, then presses it to his lips. At the same time Tashekah carefully raises the blanket a little higher, and putting her arm about her

father's neck draws his head closer to her own—allowing the curtain to fall down about his breast.

"Father, I heard you speak my name ever so low; then I knew you were not sleeping, and I was glad, for I had waited long to know and my heart was tired."

With a sigh the man strives to put away his own sadness, saying, "And what did my little night-bird want?"

"Oh, my heart is so hungry, father; all the people are bad medicine—only you and Kasko are food to me."

"*All* the people bad medicine? *Only* I and Kasko?" queries the father lightly, and now he draws from his bosom the embroidered pouch. Putting it into her hand he says: "There, my child, it was a true young hea[illegible]hat sent it to you. You must let him stand at least with Kasko; and the time must come—it may not be far off—when you will need such a friend as I know he wants to be."

"What! father, has Kin-da-shon spoken to you?—and about—me?"

"I will tell you all, Tashekah. It was ten days ago; we were on the high mountain; our way had been up and up, until that day there was no night at all. The sun went all around the sky and hardly sat down or slept at all. Of course the older men had seen it often before, but Kin-da-shon never. He stood and looked, as the time for night came, and looked as if his eyes were fastened. I spoke to him at last, for we two stood alone together, and, with trying very hard, he turned from the strange sun to me and said: 'I did forget that the Gun-un-uh sun was so, and it stole upon me; but'—and his face was beautiful as he slowly said it—'but I think the sun in my own country would shine like that if I could some time have your little Tashekah for my wife.' 'Is your father's heart for this?' I asked him; and he said,

cannot tell—I have not spoken to him yet; but I love her, Kah-sha, and if I know your heart I will talk with my father and mother that they may speak with you, and by and by call the friends for council."

"O my father, what did you say?" cries Tashekah piteously. "You don't want to send me away from you, do you?"

"No, my little one," Kah-sha replies, answering her last question first—"no: you are my light. It would be darkness indeed," he adds to himself, "if this little oil-cup were taken from me. No, Tashekah, I told him you were all I had; but when parting *must* come, I would it might be that such a heart as his should keep you warm."

"Why do you talk of parting, father? I want never to leave you—oh, it makes all my heartsickness come back to me again!" and the child shivers as if a sudden wind had chilled her. Then Kah-sha, drawing himself within the little inclosure and seating himself firmly against the wall, draws the child to his bosom and with loving arms enfolds her.

"Tell me about it now," he says. She is about to speak when a slight sound, as of a stealthy footfall, comes from without the screen. She holds her breath and waits, hearing nothing but the heavy breathing of the sleepers; then, lifting the blanket, she sees clearly against the summer twilight a dark, crouching figure passing out of the round, open doorway. With a sigh of relief Tashekah draws back, saying:

Yes, I must tell you, father, else the dream will never leave me. You had been three days gone when the medicine-man walked into the water to see what the great medicine-spirit would show him of the weather, and he found a storm was coming. Then to make you safe we kindled a great fire on the river bank and set out plenty

of food for the angry spirits. We worked very hard all day long, and into the night kept the fire burning. Grannie sat close by the blaze and told us about the spirits, and many things that Kasko nor I had ever heard before—about the dead-boxes and the awful witchcraft. She told us over again about the owl—how it came to be a witch and to know everything bad, and could tell when people were going to die. I was so tired at last I pulled my blanket around me and lay down on the ground by the fire; then all at once I lost grannie's voice and I heard a [illegible] that made my heart die. I found myself looking straight at the house-door, and my eyes grew fast on a great white owl that sat in it. Three times it flapped its wings and hooted at me, 'Your father's a witch—your father's a witch.' I could not move me, and my words were dead—only from somewhere came the words to me, '*Your father will die*,' and, as still I looked, the owl was blackest black, and as it flew away I saw that it was the *Raven*."

Tashekah has grown very cold as she told her story, and now, feeling the warmth of her father's sympathy and presence, her little frame is shaken with sobs. "I have given food to the spirits every day since then," she cries. "What more *can* I do, father? Oh, why are they so angry with us? Is there no *good* spirit anywhere?"

"My poor child!" replies her father, brought suddenly back to his own deep trouble of mind. "My poor child! so you too are opening your eyes in the dark. I could almost have wished thee blind, Tashekah."

Not fully comprehending her father's words, the girl pleads again: "You will not leave me, father? Tell me," she adds passionately—"tell me that you will not leave me! My heart is full of evil dreams; do not go to that far south country to trade. *I* will work and Kasko will

work for you—stay with us." And she clings to him tremblingly.

The dream as told by Tashekah takes more hold upon the mind of her father than he is willing she shall see, or, indeed, than he himself realizes. He is naturally a prince among his people, but he can no more separate himself from the superstitions to which he has been born than he can resolve into their prime elements the tissue and bone of his physical being.

In common with many of his people he has suffered seriously from exposure; the pain in his lungs has come to trouble him much, though all discomfort is borne in patient and absolute silence. He knows how it has ended with others, however, and he has at times been haunted with the thought that his own end is not far off. With this new presentiment of death his heart sinks. Where shall he go? It is blackness of darkness!

With a firmness born of desperation he clasps his child more closely to his breast, saying: "I *must* go, Tashekah—not for trade, as you think, but to seek light. I have heard that a white man has come to Fort Simpson; a man not like the white-skins who gave the people such bad medicine. He has brought them better things, they say, and if it is such light as I sometimes feel there *must* be *somewhere*, it will more than pay for all the evil his brothers brought.

"Now, Tashekah, more than ever I must go! My own spirit is dying; but I would die in all this darkness if through it I could find the light for thee!

"Sleep now, little one. Your father keeps the watch and safely covers you."

## CHAPTER IV.

### DEATH OF CHIEF KOOD-WOT.

IN Yhin-da-stachy, Kood-wot the chief lies dying. Ten days after the return of the traders, on a morning bright and early, the chief with his slave Usha ascended the mountain just back of the village to bring down the mountain-sheep seen grazing on its heights.

As the hunters approached, the sheep moved on with slow ease, nibbling fresh pastures as they went, but with true instinct taking the course most difficult of pursuit. In proportion as the distance lessened and the climbing became more perilous to the men, it became exciting—now crossing a gorge filled with rotten ice, then scaling a cliff, leaping a chasm, and on, over scarcely balanced bowlders, to a bare foot-hold against an overhanging wall. It had been a hard and hurried chase, when, before another steep ascent, Kood-wot sank suddenly down, and from his mouth there flowed a stream of bright red blood.

He had suffered several hemorrhages before, and now the violent exercise had induced a very serious one. He had become separated from Usha, and as he found himself sinking on the narrow ledge he had but reached, he clung with desperate but rapidly failing strength to the crag jutting at his side.

Moment after moment passed as ages to the old chief before he received any sign from without, but at last there came to his ear a shout, as one might hear it in a dream—its meaning was lost to his dulled sense. The current of his life was flowing out, its traffic with the brain had

ceased; the light faded from his sight, and the fingers, though still closed as fingers are in death, slipped from their unconscious grip, and, in an instant falling sheer over the precipice, Kood-wot lay, mangled and bleeding, in the gorge below.

Usha, approaching from the opposite direction, turned the angle of the rock which had shut them from each other's sight at the very moment that his master's hold was lost. With a shout of grief and terror he dashed down the pass with reckless speed, and after many sharp turns and steep descents he reached the unconscious but still breathing man.

With careful hands the faithful slave tried to straighten out the poor body and render its position less painful—then gathered the water-drops as they trickled from the rock, and bathed the master's forehead and chafed his hands. The eyelids quivered—the eyes rolled but gave out no sense of light or reason; the teeth gritted at times, and then were set.

Very soon Usha ran to the village for help. On a litter quickly constructed from canoe-poles and blankets, the old man has been carried down to his house amid the cries and lamentations of the people.

The heart has been found still to beat, and a medicine-man has been called in. Blanket after blanket has been brought out from the chief's long-gathering treasure and hung about the room to induce to still greater efforts against the evil spirits so greedy for another soul.

The medicine-man's appearance is hideous in the extreme. His body is bony and nude, except that girdling chest and loins are strings of teeth from the carcasses of sharks and beavers, with the claws of bears, the talons of eagles, and bones of various kinds—these suspended from the belt by slender thongs several inches in length.

But it is the face which rivets attention, with its uncanny, snakish power. The gaping mouth, the wide, thin lips, the sunken cheeks, the vulture-like nose are parts of the whole, but the mystery of the face is in the eyes, felt, not seen—for whether the eyes are large or small we cannot know. They *seem* the *face*—rather, the spirit itself! Deep-set in shadowy hollows and overhung by the matted hair, they seem to emit flame.

The hair, uncut and uncombed from birth, hangs wildly about the face and falls to the waist behind, while in and over and through it is the gray down from eagles' feathers used in his incantations.

His box, inlaid with sharks' teeth, containing his paraphernalia, is brought in by a servant and placed beside the sorcerer, who has seated himself on the floor beside the victim. He coolly surveys the articles of reward as they are offered. A hundred dollars' worth have been shown him before he very deliberately proceeds to take out his drum and charmed rattle.

The drum (really a large tambourine, about two feet in diameter—a single skin stretched tightly over a circular frame) is given to the hand of an attendant, its beats to be regulated by the fast and slow of the medicine-man's movements.

Three parts of the great house are filled with people—men, women, and children, sitting and standing, densely massed. On the fourth side, opposite the door, with head toward the wall, lies the body of the chief; at either end of this long space hang the rewards, and between them is the dancing-ground of the doctor, who now sits, limply, near the sick man's feet, with the rattle in his hand.

He has closed his eyes, and now he begins to breathe more heavily and irregularly—the drum is but touched, as by his breath.

Presently the breathing itself assumes a form of sound; there is a mutter—a rumble, gradually gaining the punctuation of a chant, weird and wild as the cries of a lost soul.

Now the eyes roll—the sight turns inward, then out again, throwing light lurid as from hell. The muscles begin to twitch, the limbs to jerk, the body to rock and sway as moved by infernal machinery.

The sight becomes fixed as held by awful power—breath comes in snorts—the chant grows louder—the drum beats quick and low; every muscle freezes tense—the air is palpitating with the powers of the unseen world.

There is a crouching of the visible champion. And now with the cry and the spring of a panther he is at the side of the mangled, prostrate form—the chant is now a shriek; the drum-beats indicate the close and awful contact of the opposing forces, the rattle is held aloft and shaken with ferocious vehemence. Now he retreats, crouches, springs clean over the body—wilder and wilder grow the singing and the drum—he dashes fiendishly at the dying man as though about to tear him to pieces—he writhes as in torment—he shrieks and moans and beats his own body—he leaps into air with uplifted arms and a blood-curdling yell—there! he has fallen and relapsed into his first position. The sounds have fallen—muffled, also. There is a clutching—a clawing at the invisible—a hissing, with lips compressed, with jaws set; the spitting of a wild-cat, the snap and snarl of a maddened dog.

A palsy seizes the whole frame of the creature, with muscles drawn to a tenseness like iron and moved by irresistible power, till, foaming at the mouth, the eyes rolling as in horrible agony, he falls under the power of the spirits he has dared to encounter. Two men spring forward and take him in their grasp, trying to prevent him

from eating his own flesh. His struggles are wild beyond description and end in a dead swoon.

He is now left to himself—for in this swoon are revealed to him the human agencies which are in league with the spirits he has assailed. Woe to the man, woman, or child who may have crossed this wretch's will at any time, or who are objects of dislike to those rich enough to pay this creature for condemning them!

The waiting people hold their breath in a silence which grows more terrible, not knowing who may be the victim of this consultation with the powers of darkness.

At one side of the fireplace, close to the front of the crowd, sit the immediate friends of the injured chief—his old wife and their children, and near the wife is her husband's nephew and heir-apparent—a sister's son, who at his uncle's death will succeed to his title, house, goods, and wife.

The young man had chanced to arrive at the village on the day before the accident, stopping at the house of his father's brother, who was no other than Ka-kee himself, now lying in the trance and the cause of such agonizing suspense to many of the spectators.

The face of the young man is painted with heavy black and red, which gives to the naturally bad face an increased ferocity of expression; a square of red cotton, folded, is bound about the head. The eyes only seem familiar to us, and they bear a striking resemblance to those of his uncle the medicine-man in their snakish expression and in the peculiar lurid effect they at times present.

There is now a look about them of not altogether disguised triumph as he glances furtively from his powerful relative now lying before him, across the assembled tribes, and rests for a moment on the sad and defiant face of a young girl who, with her people, had arrived during the

"THE GIRL IS SEIZED AND BOUND, HER FEET CLOSE TOGETHER."

incantations of the unholy priest. We recognize her the instant that her gaze meets that of the young man, and its fire of bitter enmity gives us a clew to his identity. It is Sha-hehe and Yealh-neddy.

But now the sorcerer moves, twitches and quivers again, and with the seeming agonies of a horrible death he struggles back to human life. Like one muttering in his sleep he speaks—every ear is strained to catch the words which come gurgling from that world of horrors and of mystery:

"The spirit of the great chief must pass before us ere the setting of the sun;" then in the same sepulchral tone comes the name "Sha-hehe." What else the sorcerer says and does are lost in the quick, sharp cry of terror from Sha-hehe and the general hubbub which ensues.

The girl is seized and bound, her feet close together, her hands behind her back. Her one poor garment is torn from her amid jeers and cries. On the faces of those about her are seen both horror and exultation. Her own father, in his eagerness to preserve the honor of his family, is the first to bring the great bundle of "devil-sticks" (a nettle-thorn, the least sting of which is like the sting of a hornet). No sooner has he flung them down than, by her mother's hands, the girl is thrown violently down on the venomous bed and spat upon. Others are not slow in adding the force of their strength to the torture of the young witch, smiting her still further into the stinging nettle. She is then dragged from it and her body doubled together by strong and violent hands. She is thrown then upon her back on the floor; a man jumps upon her chest and, planting his knees on it, beats her head on the planks below. The blood starts from her mouth and nose—her eyes are staring. She is all but unconscious when they drag her by the hair to a stake driven

into the ground outside the door. The stake is not more than a foot and a half high. Against it they place the girl's back, and she is then forced down into a crouching position—her poor hands still bound behind, her knees brought up against her uplifted chin, her head drawn back over the stake and to it securely tied by means of a sinew rope first braided into her hair.

She is now charged to confess her crime, the black art by which she had induced the hemorrhage and caused the death of the chief Kood-wot; but after that first sharp cry at the speaking of her name, she has uttered neither protest nor confession.

And having brought her so near to death her tormentors leave her for a while, to attend the equally important ceremonies connected with the death of the chief.

Upon the conclusion of the medicine-man's trance, leaving the witch to the certain torture of her own friends and intrusting to Yealh-neddy the duty of dispatching messengers to the different villages, the old wife has hastily brought out the chief's treasures that he may be enrobed and decked before the spirit's departure, so that its comfort in another world may be assured.

Faithful old Usha attends her; his master's face is painted as for a feast; eagle-down is blown into his hair, which is further ornamented by several small ermine skins. The poor, mangled body is lifted, twisted, and pushed into a suit of embroidered deerskin, mittens are drawn on the stiffening fingers, costly furs and a dancing-blanket are wrapped about him. At his side are placed boxes of oil and berries, bundles of dried fish and piles of blankets. On lines stretched across the room are the long-treasured riches of the chief's suits of native clothing, blankets, fur robes, dancing-blankets, beads, a battered copper kettle picked up long ago from some shore-

driven wreckage, pieces of cotton and broadcloth, pearl buttons in strings; and grouped together underneath are chests filled with many other things of various values.

These preparations are barely completed when the arms and legs of Usha are tied and he is dragged to the open space in front of the house, where nine other slaves, similarly bound, stand together in the silence of that death which awaits them.

Usha takes his place among his brethren, and the sacrifice is ready. One after another they receive a dozen or more deep stabs in different parts of the body, until the ground about them is saturated with blood.

They are then thrown down on their backs, and their necks are brought into position over a log four or five inches in diameter; another log of like dimensions is then fitted over their necks, the executioners bring the ends together, and in a few seconds more the hideous gurgling has ceased—the spirits of the ten slaves have gone out to prepare the way for and to serve the dying chief. A few moments after, it is discovered that his spirit has also gone forth.

Cremation is never accorded a slave: a menial service, a low caste, a place farthest from the fireside's cheer, go to make up the condition which drowning of the body insures—which cremation insures *against;* so, while the body of the chief lies, or, more correctly, *sits*, in state awaiting its burning honors, the bodies of the slaves are dragged out to the salt water and cast into it.

All the afternoon heavy mists have been driving up the river—now they seem to have collected about the village; the face of the sun is hidden, and an unwonted night, of pitchy darkness, falls over the summer land of Chilkat.

## CHAPTER V.

### YEALH-NEDDY'S REVENGE.

"THAT was well done, my uncle; the spirit of your great medicine-man has done a good thing for me. I don't begrudge your twenty-five blankets—though they do come out of *my* boxes."

"So, so! The young man has rather suddenly slipped into the old chief's moccasins, and is out hunting in them before the *shade* has left the house. You're an owl as well as a raven, Yealh-neddy, and you have the voices of both. You know me better than to think that with twenty-five blankets I am *paid* for this business."

"I know you better, my great medicine-chief, than to think you will not take all you can get, and, for all I see, you are likely to get the chief's snow-shoes at least—for there'll be more work for you before things fit my heart."

"I'm your fellow, but not your slave, I warn you, young man. But what does the raven want now? Isn't that girl's life enough to pay for her fun?"

"Yes; her *life*, but not, as you seem to think, her *death*. She can serve me better living than dead."

"What! You don't mean to have Sha-hehe *killed*, after all? I understand—you belong to the raven, as sure as he owns every mischief under the sun."

"Ay, that I do; or I would not be employing *your* help in the tricks I have to play. But I have done with you in *that* case; the young wild-cat will have her claws cut, and be all the better company for her *spitting; she* shall

pay for *that!* Oh, ravens! she will be a precious—how she will hiss!"

"They will make you a nice pair, my son; the old woman needs something slippery to make her go down. I believe she would stick in my throat."

"If you think *that* my game, you've tracked the wrong sheep, that's all. An old wife with a chief's name and goods is well enough, and a slave with nettles in her skin is better than an enemy thrown to the fish; but if the chief of darkness has nothing more to the taste than these, Yealh-neddy will take his trap and bow to other hunting-grounds."

"Yealh-neddy is easily pleased, but hard to satisfy. What track has he spied now?"

"Never was hunter such a fool as to take the old deer and leave the kid. I will take both—one for hide and sinew, the other for my broth."

"Ah, ha! The young daughter, too, is it? I knew you would be up to something fine. She's been shut up now for two years. She must be a beauty by this time. The old woman meant her for a great chief."

"And she gets a greater! A chief with a young slave and two wives is some distinction for a man who has seen no more winters than have dropped their snows on Yealh-neddy's head. The old woman will be glad enough to give her to me, and *she* will be glad enough to get out of that hole to go to any one. I saw her eyes to-day, while you were dancing, shining out between the boards like a young lynx's. I haven't had a chance to tell the old woman what I want, but there'll be plenty of time before the feast is over. I wonder when our friends will get here?"

"The messengers will reach Klok-won to-night, or, at farthest, by noon to-morrow; another sunset will bring

the guests. You will call a council before they go again, and have your affairs settled, won't you?"

"Yes: there is no time to be lost. Some of the chiefs are going south to trade as soon as the feast is past. I wanted to go myself, but now there will be game enough in my own place. I'll wait for another summer."

"Who goes at this time?"

"Klune, the dumb, young Kin-da-shon, and his father; likely Kah-sha and Tool-chun—that reminds me! I'm going out to take a look at my pet; my heart tells me she will be ready for fight again by this time; and, by the ravens! I need something to do; it's dull work to fast four days, even when one is to gain the chief's estate. How the rest of you poor dogs do it I don't know."

And with mock expression of commiseration for the "dogs"—his friends who would be obliged to abstain from eating any kind of food and from drinking fresh water during the four days and nights intervening between the death and the cremation of his uncle chief—Yealh-neddy made his way from the house where lay the dead man, and where the loud and incessant wailing of the women had covered the conversation which, aside, he had been holding with Ka-kee.

The sky was black—not a star was visible; the air itself seemed peopled with creatures of the dark.

'Twas such a night as causes one involuntarily to drag the foot and put out the hand, to shut the eyes on what we cannot see, that the inner sight may the more keenly perceive what lies about us.

A little to one side, and back of the big house, Shahehe's stake had been fixed. By reason of the excitement attendant on the sacrifice of the slaves, and afterward the gathering of the mourners to cry dry the river through which they would have their chief pass dry-shod, the

young witch had been left almost unnoticed, and, for a time, unnoticing.

The weird chant, the wild wailing of the women, had entered into her benumbed, unreasoning mind; its chorus of indescribable sound seemed to rise from source unfathomable and to echo through eternity the cries of an endless wandering. Her stupor became heavier. Nature was kinder than her children; and while the poor body bled from their torture, *she* closed its windows and its doors for a time and took the spirit roving. There were bright green fields before her now; flowers of unearthly brightness bloomed all about her; waters fell in sweetest freshness and their music mingled with the song of birds. She danced along with the lightness of a sunbeam, and glanced through vapors of fragrance. Was this life—or was this death?

Suddenly a shadow of intense blackness crossed her beautiful sky. The bird's song became a croak, the flowers were changed to toads, the zephyrs with which she played became the flapping of a raven's wing. Now the evil bird was at her side, it pecked the flesh from her hands and feet; now it lighted on her shoulder with its horrid, croaking laugh; and now—it wears the face of Yealh-neddy! In a moment more he has buried his beak in her brain. She struggles, but her hands and her feet are bound with burning bands—she cannot move. In breathless agony she awakes!

The night closes in awful thickness about her. The human cries mingle with the unearthly, melancholy, and prolonged yelps of a hundred Kling-get dogs and the hooting of the owls.

She cannot at first distinguish or separate the sounds—they come to her like pulsations of the darkness.

Her own miseries are as yet undefined. She does not

know that the thongs are working into her flesh, that the atmosphere's humidity has bathed her still rigid body until the gathered moisture, all stained with blood from her wounds, is trickling to the earth from her bare limbs.

She does not know—she cannot recall—she is unable to think. She only *feels*—FEELS—FEELS!

With her is neither time, nor space, nor place. It is *eternity*. Yet, *what* is *that?* A word—a voice has had power to wake the nerves, to send life back into the brain channels which had been for a time deserted. She shudders with unspeakable horror as she recognizes the tones of Yealh-neddy.

"So, so, my fair one, you are courting the raven to-night? He is a black lover for the rice-blossom. Let us awaken his jealousy—he will hold you the tighter by and by. Ah, no word? Not one tender word for me? Stay! Let me give you cause for one." And with a stick of the devil's thorn he strikes her cheek.

She makes no outcry. Leaving her for a moment, he returns with a basket of foul water, and into the defenceless, upturned face brutally he throws it. Eyes and throat are filled with the vile and burning liquid—which finds, too, every laceration on the broken body.

Only a low, half-strangled cry escapes the girl. Hoping to provoke him now into finishing the horrid work, into placing her beyond the reach of further torture, and knowing instinctively that utter silence on her part will the more surely accomplish this end with him, she makes agonizing effort to suppress all sign of suffering.

"No answer yet?" he mutters. "Then, by the chief's shade, I'll have one!"

But Sha-hehe, overcome with terror and pain, sinks again into merciful unconsciousness.

Yealh-neddy has not perceived this, when one of his

own dogs, with a low, quick growl, springs out from the brush near by, and the man, with the weakness of superstition and the strength of sin upon him, slinks back through the gloom, while the more humane brute, sniffing about, finds the sufferer, and pressing kindly face against her, licks her stings.

## CHAPTER VI.

### KOTCH-KUL-AH.

KOTCH-KUL-AH, the young daughter of the dead chief, upon reaching the borderland of womanhood, was secluded from all companionship (according to the custom of the Kling-gets) until a husband should be found for her—one who should meet the approval of her parents and her mother's friends.

Her father's house differs a little in its interior arrangement from that in Chilkoot which has been described· for extending along the four sides of this dwelling is a platform perhaps six feet in width, raised about three feet above the floor, which has as its centre the large, square, gravelled fireplace. A part of this platform is roughly inclosed into box-like compartments used as store-rooms for the chief's treasures.

As there is no opening in the outside wall of the house except the one small door (the light being admitted only through the hole in the roof left as a smoke-escape), these little cupboards are close and quite dark, except for the few rays of light which may make their way through the shadows of the great house and effect an entrance through the cracks of the rude partition.

One of these inclosures has been the prison-house of the young girl during the summer months. A small excavation, very much like a shallow cistern, unwalled, under the floor of the house, made her winter quarters.

During the period of confinement she has been seen by

no one, visited by no one, save her mother, who brings or throws her supplies of food and water.

Kotch-kul-ah has in truth wearied of this living death. Passing from her first feeling of revolt against being given as an unconsulted partner in such an alliance as among her people often stands for marriage, she has come to regard it as a door of escape into a life that will at least afford her some freedom of action.

Lying day after day and night after night in what she has often wished *were* her *dead-box*, thought and memory have carried her back to the free days of childhood, when, with troops of shouting children, she drew the tide-belated fish from the sea moss or picked berries on the mountain-side; when she played "hide-and-seek" in the forest or lay rocking idly in shady-coved canoe.

To-day the bringing of her father into the house, all bleeding as he was, the doctor's dance, and all the exciting scenes connected with the occasion, though observed only as she could get glimpses through the cracks of her cell, have been tastes of life to the girl whose feelings are dulled, benumbed, by her two years of imprisonment.

No wholesome sorrow has come to bless her heart; no fountain of life springing from natural affection has blessed her with tears of grief. She wondered, languidly, when she knew that her father's spirit had gone, if his slaves would be faithful, if they would care for him on the long, long journey to the other world. She wondered if he would be able to gain the attention of that strange spirit on the beautiful island—if he would hear and come quickly to bear her father over. She was glad that they had burned for him so much food—that he had so many treasures to take with him. She had seen them give him even a package of paint for his face, and hang about his neck a bag of charms to ward off evils by the

way. After these things she stupidly wondered—what next?

And now her mother comes to give the young face a thick coat of heavy black paint, just as her own has been dressed, with little tear-courses left clear adown the cheeks, giving the impression of long tear-shedding by the relatives before the ceremonial weeping has begun.

The mother's hair has been closely cropped, but her daughter's is left untouched, since she is not regarded as a near relative of her father's. Beautiful hair it is—long and shining; and during these two years carefully combed with coarse wooden comb and her own slender fingers.

"Kotch-kul-ah," the mother says, "your father's shade has passed. You know who he is that takes his place?"

"Yes, I know; his nephew, Yealh-neddy, comes next. What plans are his, think you?"

"His *will* is to take us both. His heart is big for possessions; he begrudges what we burn for your father; but he is proud, too, and he will make a pot-latch to be talked of in every village; and by it he will make to himself a debtor of every man, woman, and child in the Chilkat country. While he lives the large gift of every other man's feast must be Yealh-neddy's. You may be glad to share with your mother in this matter. You could do much worse; and I know not how you could do better."

"What of the other nephew—*your* brother's son—who stole my *father's* heart long ago? Don't you remember, mother, when father said that to Kin-da-shon, he answered, laughing, that he would *keep* it, then, till father gave him *mine?* Father liked it well, I could see. You haven't forgotten. Has *he* forgotten that?"

"Oh, why think of it? Kin-da-shon will not be a great chief, nor rich, like Yealh-neddy. Besides, it was play-

talk to all but your father; the next salmon season we were to talk about your husband—and Kin-da-shon has not asked for you," she adds artfully.

"Has he asked for any other wife?" now cries the girl, with passion, as though suddenly the speech had drawn away the curtains woven by her long isolation, and she saw her old playfellow in a new intensity of light that awakens in *her* strange life, and power, and weakness.

It is no peep into her own heart. It is as though, having been dead, she had come into life. It had been as though they talked of some one else whose fate mattered nothing to her; then suddenly it was of *herself*—it was *her* fate, and it meant *everything*. She *lives*, and finds herself in a living world, more full of life than she had dreamed of in the old free days. Her mother's reply is awaited with anxious interest. The words come carelessly:

"I have heard no talk for Kin-da-shon. Wait; you shall see them both; it must be settled soon, now."

"How I wish these crying days were over!"

"Well, the feasting will come when the crying is done."

"What of Sha-hehe—what will be her death?"

"I know nothing about that. She will be starved and tortured the nine days, anyhow."

"I wonder if she will confess. *I* would, and let them get done with me the sooner. Why should a witch want to live—with agony for an only friend and shame forever?"

With this remark, Kotch-kul-ah rises to her feet and draws her blanket of fringed squirrel-skin close about her. On her head she places a wooden hat, from the brim of which is suspended a heavy leather fringe, which completely obscures her face. The time at first agreed upon as the limit of her confinement has but lately come to a close, a little sooner than has been found convenient to

arrange for her marriage, so that this new liberty of walking after nightfall with her mother has been accorded her with certain modest restrictions.

Very soon the people will be returning for the night, and she must be safely housed again before the crowd gathers. Without further words the two pass through the great room and into the darkness without.

The ground on one side of the door is slippery with the blood of the slaves; by taking the opposite course they soon approach the stake of Sha-hehe, their moccasined tread giving no hint of their coming. Yealh-neddy is still busy with his victim. At the sound of his voice the women turn aside, passing silently as they came, and remain unseen but within hearing until the dog, which has followed them, springs through the intervening brush in pursuit of some small night-loving game, and startles Yealh-neddy in his deed of evil.

A few hours before Kotch-kul-ah could have heard such words as he now had uttered with unthinking indifference. Her heart had been in a stupor. The common conversation among the people in her father's house had been of such a nature as to toughen and roughen the soul. Before her weary imprisonment she had never thought of it at all; but, sitting in the darkness, apart and alone, she did think a little. As it came to her ears day after day she sickened of it, then grew apathetic, and at last unfeeling. It mattered nothing to her how many slaves were butchered to show their master's wealth, nor how many witches were taken, nor whether they were made slaves of or cut into pieces, or strangled or buried alive. She had seen all these things done without the burning of heart that possesses her now. It is not that a witch-girl is being made to suffer; no doubt she deserves more than death. 'Tis that the *woman*, God-created, even in the

savage breast, has been awakened in this naturally impetuous girl. Kotch-kul-ah is all-unconscious of the work being done within her by this newly discovered love. We have seen solid walls of snow melt down in a few hours from where they have stood undaunted for months; as their waters have flooded the ground we have seen great, dark, woolly fern-balls rise by some unseen force, and, in as many more hours, stand on stalks, erect, as high as a man's shoulder; then, day by day, under that same magnetic power, they have unrolled, unfolded, until their palmy fronds have reached far out toward heaven.

Kotch-kul-ah's nature has been buried under such weight; a spiritual force mighty as the sun has now begun its work for her; already *life* is showing; whether any *beauty* lies hidden within, the future must disclose.

In what she overheard of Yealh-neddy's speech to Shahehe there was that which angered her as she had never before been angered. She cannot explain it, for she understands neither the cause nor character of her resentment. She knows only that her whole spirit rebels against this fellow, and an unspoken vow is taken upon her soul to escape from him if she gives life itself in the attempt. At the same time life becomes more desirable than ever before as, involuntarily, against the background of all that excites her indignation there is brought out in ever stronger-growing light the character of Kin-da-shon—brave, gentle, generous, and true. She knew him that in the long ago; so many things are coming back to her—things long since forgotten—and she wonders *how* she could forget. She can never again forget. If Kin-da-shon cannot be her husband she can die; but another she will not have.

Not a word will she speak—even the mother here must not know how she longs for him till he himself has spoken;

death may come, but she will not choose shame. She *thinks* so; the plant is high, not yet unfolded.

They have passed by the unconscious Sha-hehe—the old woman with words of hate, not knowing that she was beyond their reach; Kotch-kul-ah absorbed with the world she has found within herself; but as they approach the entrance she instinctively draws her blanket more closely about her face, and, unnoticed, reaches her closet, where she is again shut in.

The fire is being built up for the night, which has grown cold, and the bright, high-leaping flames soon send a glow to the farthest corners of the great house.

For to-night people come and go as they will. The friends from other villages cannot arrive before to-morrow, and the ceremonies will not begin until they come. But there is weeping with the coming in of each group of friends—noisy weeping; and such arrangements as can be decided upon are talked over and settled.

The most interesting of these is the decision of the widow as to her husband's successor, and the agreement of herself and her brothers and sisters as to whom her daughter, Kotch-kul-ah, shall be given as wife. She has reasons for speedily desiring this settlement fully made before the arrival of her half-brother, Shans-ga-gate, and his son, Kin-da-shon, from Klok-won.

For this purpose the widow, Kah-da-guah, her old mother, and her immediate family have seated themselves together; but the matter in hand does not exclude outsiders, nor does their presence at all embarrass the council.

The preference for Yealh-neddy seems to have been so well understood that no other aspirant has been brought forward. With his mother and his mother's brother, Yealh-neddy comes forward to present his claim and show

his worth. His mother and uncle also speak, boasting of the young man's prowess, his youth and strength, his sagacity, and what he can give to show his appreciation of what he gets.

Kah-da-guah, as a vain woman, had been flattered by Yealh-neddy's determination. All the more that she knew his lawless character, his evil life, and his unwillingness ever before to take a wife. She very well knew that she could not expect to reign alone; her kingdom in Yealh-neddy must sooner or later be shared with another and younger woman. This she did not object to if she could maintain the first place in importance and authority, and she saw no difficulty in that if her daughter were the chosen second.

Yealh-neddy, without knowing this mind of the widow, had, as she divined from the first, meant to have them both. His double suit is presented, not without an air of condescension on his own part, though unnoticed by the woman, who sees only her own ambition gratified. Her friends are equally pleased, or, in some cases, indifferent.

And so, without any show of the extreme satisfaction of both parties, it is fully and finally settled that Yealh-neddy is the chief, and that in one month after the present feast his marriage with Kah-da-guah and her daughter, Kotch-kul-ah, shall be consummated—an agreement as binding as marriage itself, the violation of which brings shame and war and death.

Kotch-kul-ah in her closet has overheard enough of what has passed in the council to know that her fate has been sealed, as far as powerful relatives and the sternest of tribal laws can fix it. All the more fiercely she resolves to wrest herself from its hateful decree, be the end life or death.

She will not throw herself upon Kin-da-shon—oh, no!

And it is not shame alone which prevents such a step. She too well knows how utterly futile such a course would be; he could do nothing even if his heart were breaking for her, and the effort would only bring shame and death to him as well as to herself. No; *that* she could not do; but this—*this* she cannot, *will* not do. She must get away. How? Where? What *can* she do?

She must think—and think. She must make it out. She wishes her head were more used to working; she wishes it would quit throbbing so.

Several hours of such vain labor pass, when, unused as she is to any struggle, Kotch-kul-ah falls into a dream-troubled sleep, in which she is fleeing, fleeing, and ever pursued, until, driven to the edge of a precipice, she leaps into its darkness and falls, falls—into *what* is she falling?

Ah! she is awake now, and her body is wet with the sweat of horror. The people have gone to their own homes, the fire is out; she shivers with cold—no, she is hot, burning, smothering—she cannot breathe; she must break these walls! Stop; here is the door. Strange! it is unlocked! She does not know that her mother had come to tell her what had been done, after all was over, and had found her asleep; then, so absorbed in other matters, had forgotten to bolt the door as she went out.

It yields readily to Kotch-kul-ah's touch. She holds it open to listen before taking a step—*that* sense has had the full benefit of training. By the sounds of breathing she is able to locate every creature in that great room, and knows just when she may safely pass. They sleep heavily, weary with the day's excitement.

She opens the little door wide back against the wall, and leaves it so; then, with her blanket drawn close about her, she silently passes out of the house. Not a thought of what she shall do, when freedom from the house is

gained, has crossed her mind; she has obeyed simply an impulse of fevered blood. "Out! away!" it had cried. The fresh, cold air stimulates her brain to ask: "Why did I come here? What am I going to do?"

At another time she would have been paralyzed with fear at finding herself alone at such an hour, a companion of frogs and owls, open to all mysterious and evil influences. To-night she is strangely indifferent to these things; she has no fear. When the fact occurs to her she wonders why.

Hark! was that a human voice? Whence did it come? She puts her hand, shell-like, to her ear. Ah! that is the witch-girl groaning. Mechanically she follows the sound until she stands beside Sha-hehe. The clouds have begun to break; a breeze is rising and begins to send them scurrying hither and thither—not certainly yet in any single direction, but letting through their parted folds light enough for eyes long accustomed to darkness to see the misery before them. The tongue is speechless, swollen and protruding; a gurgling sound is brought with every breath. The eyes are glassy and stand out with fulness of agony. Consciousness is perfect now—more perfect than ever before. It has told Sha-hehe that one, *not* an enemy, is near. All the entreaty which might be conveyed by speech and gesture is concentrated in her eyes; they pray, they implore.

And Kotch-kul-ah—what is she doing? Brought up in the belief that a witch is the direct agent of the most powerful of devils, whom to pity is to court—where is her fear, her superstition stronger than the fear of death?

She knows not, herself; she even wonders, when she has had time to think, how she could do it. She has kneeled beside Sha-hehe; she tries to loose her bonds with her delicate fingers. Finding it impossible to remove the

ropes without a knife, and knowing that it is equally impossible to obtain such an instrument now, she recollects that her supper of dried fish and water is in her closet untouched.*

She will go and bring the water; perhaps the girl can swallow a little—at least her parched tongue can be wet.

With more painstaking than she had come, Kotch-kul-ah returns to the house, listening again at the outer door. But a moment more, and with the little basket of water she has come again, and stands bending over the helpless creature, dipping her fingers into the water and letting it fall in cooling drops on the poor sufferer's tongue.

A glow of warm, rosy light is even now beginning to show above the mountain. With something more akin to concern than she has before felt, Kotch-kul-ah retraces her steps to the house. Within it is yet dark, and the sleepers still sleep heavily.

Once again within her prison, she carefully closes her door and crouches down on the floor—to sleep or to think!

Sleep had fled; thoughts all unwelcome come upon her like ravens. How many times she has seen the hateful creatures sailing round and round over the poor salmon ensnared by the tide and lying on the sand, until these evil birds took out their eyes and left the blinded things to die.

Yes; that is what these thoughts are like. She will beat them off!

There they come again, round and round. What has she done? Succored a witch? Surely her case was evil enough before! What now? Why, now, turn which way she may, evil spirits will attend to destroy her! What may they not do?

She will welcome death. What then? Devils, face to face!—she *cannot* die! Oh, for rest!—for a place of refuge!

* Not being of her father's tribe, she was not obliged to fast.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN THE MEADOWS.

WITH early morning came the sun forth, bright and clear. A fresh breeze has brought fair weather from the north, leaving not a trace of last night's fog and gloom.

Many of the children, escaping from the dismal sleeping-houses, make their way to the great woodland which stretches across the peninsula, and spend hours in play and in gathering goodies of gum and balsam and spicy buds.

Some of the children follow the trail; others, bringing heavy charges of babies in blankets on their backs, have embarked in a little old canoe, which is both leaking and creaking, but made to do good service on such occasions.

With every dip of the paddle the cracks in the bottom yawn, and water rushes into the old shell—but that only serves to make the trip more interesting to these fearless mariners; and while some dexterously send the boat forward, others, with little old baskets and wooden ladles, deftly dip the water out. By instinct they keep the equilibrium of these canoes, so sensitive to a false balance that the best care of a novice does not always insure his safety.

Here are babies of a few months and upward in the care of boys and girls of six to ten years! They roll about, apparently without guard. Those who are two and three years old are playing at paddling, or snatching at the shell-fish seen on the sand under the shallow water.

By coming at high tide a mile of sand is traversed thus easily, and then they enter the meadows through winding water-ways, cut by freshets and worn by the tides, wide enough only for their small canoes, but reaching full half a mile inland.

In this clear, brook-like passage numberless minnows dart about, like sunbeams in the shade and like shadows in the sunlight. Flowers hide among the high grass and the graceful rushes; little vines drop from the overtopping luxuriance down the soft clay banks.

Now the children, with jest and laughter, grasp at the verdure; and some, in teasing mood, hold fast, stopping the progress of the party. In imperturbable good-humor they make the best of the delay by scratching curious figures on the smooth surface of the clay bank with sticks and fingers or with nimble toes.

While thus engaged a merry-eyed, muscular little fellow, quietly and unnoticed, rolls out of the boat, and in an instant, by his sudden lifting shove, the canoe has shot forward, scattering girls and boys, babies and baskets, promiscuously! Babies cry, but laugh through their tears as they are presently brought right side up again by their nurses, who are ducking about and shouting in keen appreciation of the joke.

The laughing-eyed joker has sprung to the top of the bank, his trick accomplished, and after him go the boys to bring him to account. Into the high grass they dive and flounder together in a merry tussle, so engaged in frolic and fun they do not notice the party approaching by the wooded trail, Da-shu, from the portage, toward Yhin-da-stachy.

The children, however, are not unnoticed by the travellers, some of whom, attracted by the noise, turn aside to learn the meaning of it. Among those who do so is

Kah-sha, with Kasko proudly bearing a part of his father's burden, while dancing now before them and again at their side is Tashekah, happy at being allowed to accompany her father so far on his journey.

At sight of the new-comers the children leave off their sport and stand in groups abashed, as expecting reprimand, but when Kah-sha speaks it is with gentleness, though his words are grave:

"My little ones, you bring with you none of the sorrow of your mothers;" and then reflectively, as though more to himself than to them, he adds: "Well, it were sadder if you did; this world will be darker yet when there are no sunbeams."

As he spoke he sat down wearily and lay back, resting against his pack, and the children without fear raise their eyes again.

Kunz, of the laughing eye, snatches up a basket and darts away to a spring of fresh water in the edge of the forest, into which he dips and brings the refreshing draught in grateful kindness to Kah-sha, who thanks the little rogue and drinks.

No sooner does he resume his position than his cough begins, racking his whole body. Kasko has made loose the straps of the packs, and soon the father turns over on the grass, that he may the better hide the streaks of bright blood which he has found coming with the cough. He would have no one know what would endanger the life or peace of any living creature. He wishes no witch to suffer for him.

Tashekah, sitting at her father's feet, waits anxiously. Kasko, ever on the alert, has already been down to the canoe, which, for the time, had been entirely deserted; finding it safe enough and the tide already turned, he has lost no time in striking a bargain with the children.

Then laying sticks and rushes across the bottom, where the pack is to be placed, he calls brightly to Tashekah and their father to come and jump in before the quickly ebbing tide leaves the passage dry. With his springing, bounding step he has reached them by the time Kah-sha has gained his feet, Tashekah clinging to her father's hand. Then throwing his lithe young body against the pack which had been the father's, Kasko rises with it and leads the way to the canoe.

Pleased at the change, Tashekah nimbly takes her place in the bottom with a ladle for dipping, and without dissent her father seats himself in one end, while Kasko places the pack in the other, and, throwing aside the clothing worn by the trail, he wades in, takes the canoe by the after part, thus guiding and pushing the little old craft down and out with the tide.

By the time they have reached the open water Kah-sha is quite himself, and, as he takes a paddle, Kasko dives into the deeper water, washing the sand from his limbs; then, through the grass, he returns to the children, who are standing guard over his dress and his pack. The members of his party who kept the trail have moved on and are now seen crossing the sand-flat to the village. Thus left to himself, Kasko determines on a little relaxation. Throwing himself down at full length on the grass, he raises his head and folds his arms under it, questioning: "What are they doing over there, youngsters?" with a movement of the head toward their village.

"Nothing," comes from a number of voices; but Kunz waits to say: "Sleeping."

"Well, then, what *have* they done? What are they *going* to do? How many days do they fast?"

"I heard them say last night that they would fast for four days." This from Kunz alone.

"Ah! then burn the body and have the feast on the fifth; and on the sixth day the trading party goes on. What else?"

"Many things else. Kood-wot's wife is going to take Yealh-neddy; and he wants Kotch-kul-ah, too; and Sha-hehe's a *witch!*"

"Sha-hehe is the witch? Ah!" and in an undertone: "I thought it was only her blind fright that drove her to the dead-house that night; but it must have been that she was making up with the spirits of darkness. Foolish girl! they will bring her to a shameful end." Then:

"Have the 'above people' come yet?" meaning the friends from the upper villages.

"Hadn't come when we left, or the folks wouldn't have been sleeping; and if they've come since, I haven't Yealh's eyes to see;" with which sententious reply Kunz took a somersault, and then, with feet aloft, a few steps on his hands; when, with another spring, he comes again upon his feet, and shouting to the other children to come on, he and soon they have vanished, except for a porpoise-like motion on the surface of the sea of grass and the "wake" they leave behind them in making their way to the woodland.

The sun has now grown hot, and as Kasko drops his face upon his folded arms he becomes conscious only of exceeding physical comfort; and almost before the sounds of the child-voices have died away, even this sense of feeling sleeps—deep, restful, dreamless sleep.

Meanwhile Kah-sha and his daughter, also their friends by the trail, have arrived, and are received in the village, where all await the coming of the mourning friends from up the river.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### MOURNING DAYS.

IN one of the oldest and largest houses of the village Kutwulhtoo live, in primitive Kling-get fashion, the dead chief's father, four sisters, their respective husbands and families, and a number of their married daughters with husbands—and children also!

In one of the corners, farthest from the door, the patriarch reclines—sire of the house—with descendants a hundred or more. His hair is thin and white; his face, by reason of its noble nose and clear-cut features, whose outlines are unbroken by any beard, is still a striking one; but the fire which once lighted the eyes and moved the man has died out.

As he lies back, half-sitting, on a small feather-bed, with a number of large pillows supporting him, he is employed in pinching out the persistent hairs which are ever starting from his cheeks and chin, using for the purpose a pair of small tweezers, hammered out of native metal—an implement whose counterpart may be found in the outfit of every Kling-get man; it is worn about the neck on a slender leathern guard, and so hangs on the breast ready for instant use in moments of leisure.

Near the old man is his wife, preparing his morning meal—eggs of wild-fowl and fish-broth. She is a robust young woman of about twenty years, a child of the old man's third daughter. As the father is always of the opposite side to his wife, and as the children always belong to their mother and her tribe, a man has no descendants—

none, save his own children, whom he may not lawfully marry; and there seems to be a decided preference among the Kling-gets for partners of their own blood. When old Ka-dake's first wife died her place was given to the young daughter of their eldest daughter. This young wife bore a family also, and died. Her place was then filled by a daughter of the next in order of the old wife's daughters; she too was mother of a multitude, and died. The present wife had been given to her grandfather-husband at the age of twelve years; and, in seclusion now, is the twelve-year-old Kalhga, child of the old wife's fourth daughter, who has been set apart for her grandfather in case his present wife does not survive him.

Kalhga is not alone in her seclusion; her cousin, Shawet-honga, of the same age and condition, has, as a matter of convenience, been allowed to share her privations.

In this house is no platform or partitions; the one large, open room is common to all the families that comprise its household. It stands, as most native houses stand, on the side of a bluff near to and facing, with its single small door, the river dashing southward.

Within the great, dark house, in the wall next the hill, is a small opening, rudely fitted with a heavy door. Near the top of the door is a square hole, large enough for the hand or a small dish to be passed through; over this opening hangs a curtain of heavy fringe, made of leather, to exclude light and sight; yet it admits of food being passed through—for this is the entrance to the girls' prison.

The cave itself—for it is nothing more—is of two parts, neither more than three feet high; the compartment next the great room is two and a half feet deep by three and a half long, and to prevent the earth from falling in it has been lined with rough-hewn planks. Opening from the

back of this room is the other—simply a hole, earth above, below, and around—without the faintest ray of light. It was into this *hole—this grave*, first, that Kalhga and Shawet-honga were thrust, and fastened by a door between the two cells. In this place for the first ten days they received their daily supply of food and water, in darkness and in silence, not even knowing whose hand passed it to them. Turn which way they might, there was not room to straighten their bodies; nor can they even now, in this outer prison, which they have occupied since the first stage of their purification.

But these girls have been too full of vigorous life to be entirely subdued by a month of confinement even such as this. They have had each other's company and could speak to each other; and no one, unreduced to such extremities, could imagine the many ways they have found to relieve the tedium: Story-telling, with their heads close together, so that too much speech might not be reproved by their elders in the room without; guessing riddles, making images of fish, birds, and animals out of the soil, scraped with their fingers from the wall of their cave and moistened with the water or the gummy fish-broth brought them to drink. They have dreamed dreams and planned exploits. They knew that their prison-house door was to remain unopened for a year and two months, for so the time had been fixed. Lately they have been given the prepared inner bark of cedar for weaving the coarser baskets for household use. After a time, when their eyes are used to darkness or their other senses quickened enough to do without light, they will have sewing to do.

But all this does not mean happy contentment. To *endure* is a characteristic of the people—to endure cheerfully, at least uncomplainingly; and the trait is largely

due, perhaps, to the binding of their babies hand and foot for much of the first year of life. The custom certainly does beget submission and develops a faculty for making the best of circumstances.

Kalhga and Shawet-honga knew that it was now the glorious summer-time; they knew that the birds were singing and the wild rice and yan-a-ate ready to gather; that the time of canoeing and sweet out-door life, loved by all young things, had come.

They had sometimes heard the voices of children outside in happy, gleeful laughter; once—they could tell by the sounds—they were playing around and around the house at a game of tag. That was while the girls were scraping down the wall of their prison for material for doll-making; and a thought came—a thought which they hardly dared to breathe one to the other; but once spoken, the thought gradually became a project. They *could* do it—some of these days they *would* do it. They would *dig out* of that place for *one* day's fun and freedom; they knew it could hardly be more.

Suddenly, to-day, the girls have caught the sound of some unusual noise and stir in the family room. By going close to the opening and holding the ear against the fringe, they hear the news brought by the messengers from Yhin-da-stachy.

The message is received by the family with many tears and much loud wailing, which soon draws to the house many of the neighboring families. Notwithstanding the excitement, however, very soon after their arrival the messengers are served by the slaves of the house with the best refreshment which the day affords. Relay messengers have already been dispatched to Klok-won, bearing the news to Shans-ga-gate, father of Kin-da-shon. Nor is there any time lost by those going to Yhin-da-stachy.

Each of the women, both great and small, is quickly and skilfully shorn of her hair, and the faces of the entire household are painted with a mixture of soot and oil. As a sign also of their sorrowful and broken spirits they clothe themselves in their poorest garments, soiled and ragged, though they must have with them their very best; straight gowns of costly Hudson Bay print; leggings and moccasins of embroidered leather, fine as chamois-skin, with the high-class blankets varying in style from the soft-dressed robes of marten, black fox, and sea-otter to the more modern blanket of navy blue bordered with scarlet broadcloth, and ornamented with rows on rows of the finest of pearl buttons, set close on the inner edge of the border. The materials alone for one of these blankets have cost several hundreds of dollars.

The clothing, together with carved totem dishes and trays, showing their family, must be made into packs and conveyed to the canoes ready for the journey. With such preparations all are busy, until the cry comes from those on the lookout that Shans-ga-gate's canoe has been sighted, when they repair to the bank of the stream, and with one accord send out the cry of mourning and greeting to those whom the current is rapidly bringing toward them; and from those approaching a responsive wailing is soon heard.

Scarcely a moment's pause is made by the Klok-won canoe. The Kutwulhtoo people have already taken their places in the waiting boats and are holding the shore with paddles set in the bank until Shans-ga-gate's has approached near enough to fall into line; then, one by one, the waiting five are given to the rushing rapids of the narrow channel, and all are afloat in processional order.

The bed of the Chilkat River is several miles wide; after making something of a bend at Klok-won the main

body of water is thrown against the eastern shore, which it continues to follow as far as Yhin-da-stachy, forming a channel narrow, deep, and swift. It has ploughed through the sand until the furrow thrown upon its western side has grown into a series of islands, now covered with brightest verdure; moss, flowers, shrubs, and even trees draw life from the soil and insure the island's own existence.

This channel will average perhaps thirty feet in width, and between its lovely overhung shores makes many a turn and eddy. The boatman's constant care is required to keep his rapidly moving craft in free stream by the use of poles. 'Tis here the beautiful salmon trout are found in such countless numbers.

On the other side of the islands the lesser body of water meanders over the wide wastes of sand, forever shifting its shallow channels, by which all ascents of the river are made laboriously. Often the boatman runs along the sand, drawing after him his lightened canoe with a rope; again, where the depth of water is great enough to admit of his weight in the boat, he proceeds by poling.

Ascending the river thus, by light boat, often requires two or three days, including necessary stops; while for the downward trip a few hours suffice, with no propelling force save the water's own.

When the messengers had arrived at Klok-won they found Shans-ga-gate with preparations almost complete for a trip to Yhin-da-stachy; but it had been planned with a very different end in view from that for which he was now called. Kin-da-shon, though he had many sisters, was the only son of his parents, and his prospects gave them much concern. That he should be chosen by his uncle Kood-wot as his successor (though not a sister's son), and thus recommended to the widow, had been the first ambition of Shans-ga-gate and Sha-ga-uk, his wife,

in thinking of the future and its changes, not dreaming *this* change so near.

Kin-da-shon's honest and manly ways had very early made him a favorite with his uncle-chief, beyond the regard he had for any of his sisters' sons, so that the parents' hope was not altogether wild. It was with the desire of reaching something definite on this point that Shans-ga-gate and his wife had determined to accompany their son to Yhin-da-stachy as he went to join the band of traders going south. That very day they were to go, that they might have a few days' visit before the party should assemble.

The tidings of the chief's sudden death, coming thus athwart his plans, had thrown Shans-ga-gate into deepest gloom. From such details as had been gleaned from the men as to the presence of Yealh-neddy in the house of death and the widow's evident willingness to give him the place of her husband, they knew that all their own plans in that direction were worse than vain.

Sha-ga-uk was t' first to recover from the shock and to spring with hope to the next best thing.

"It were doubtful," she said, "that Kin-da-shon would think gladly on the old wife, anyway; but there is Kotch-kul-ah, new and beautiful; they were always friends, and her hiding-time is even now at an end. It is the time to ask for her, and when Kin-da-shon has come again from his trading he will have enough to take her with of his own. That is good; that is best. Let us get off at once!"

It was some time before Shans-ga-gate warmed to his wife's new enthusiasm; but when at length he did it was with no half-heart that he took up the cause. It was well; he would be satisfied.

There was no time to speak of the matter to Kin-da-shon—they must be off; but that was unimportant. He

would be pleased enough; and if he were not just at first he was sure to be in time, and recognize his parents' wisdom in making for him such an arrangement.

They were soon on the way, and in a short time had passed Kutwulhtoo, there joining the other mourners as has been described.

Neither Shans-ga-gate nor his son takes active part in the management of their canoe to-day. Naturally there is but little speech among the party; each is busy with his own thoughts. Kin-da-shon has his.

The boy's love-story is a little book in his own heart. To the child-woman, Tashekah, his ideal of sweet innocence and beauty, he has never breathed a syllable of it. He found it easier to speak to Kah-sha, yet even to him he gave but a sign. He has been thinking much of what it all is to him since his return from the Stick country, and has made up his mind that as opportunity shall open in the course of their long journey he will open his heart to the father of Tashekah.

There will be time enough, he thinks; she is but a bud-woman yet, and when they come back from their trading he will speak to his mother, that the necessary arrangements may be made for their engagement; and then, after a year perhaps, they may be married, and he will live with Kah-sha, whom he loves, and with Kasko—bright, true Kasko—and with Tashekah, sweetest of all.

As he lies against his pack in the canoe, gliding through the enchanting channel, now with closed eyes and again absorbing, half-unconsciously, its beauty, he is dreaming of these things. He wonders if she might possibly come over with her father; he wonders if she has grown or changed much since he saw her half a year ago. He is certain that she cannot change except to be still more lovely.

"My little one! my little one with the fawn's eyes and the heart of a rice-flower—and she will always be that to me!" he murmurs softly to himself.

The sun has not yet reached its northern limit when the travellers gain a view of Yhin-da-stachy, all aglow with red light from the low sun; and in a moment more they are greeted by the wailing cries of many voices proceeding from the house of the dead, where news of the arrival has been promptly reported.

As soon as their cry has been heard there comes a quick response from those in the boats, and the united voices of both parties continue their loud and indescribably doleful demonstrations until the six canoes have been landed and the new-comers have entered the house. Here, gazing on their cold and silent host and brother, arrayed in all his earthly glory, the ceremonial crying is mingled with the unmistakable tears and sobs of grief.

Gradually the people grow calm, the crying is hushed, and the new-comers mix with the friends of the house, and learn in low conversations all that has taken place in connection with the chief's death.

Shans-ga-gate and his wife were not long in learning how their plans for Kin-da-shon had been frustrated. The dislike which they had always held for Yealh-neddy increased in bitterness; and for the widow-bride also, Shans-ga-gate's half-sister, they felt a growing resentment which presaged trouble. Knowing that nothing but evil could come from any effort on their part now to change the decision of the family in regard to Koich-kul-ah, the disappointed parents soon fell into a sullen, silent brooding.

Kin-da-shon had not waited to hear the talk in the house; he had been really attached to his uncle-chief—*brothers* their tribal relations made them. As he had gazed for a few moments at the still and stiffened form of

him he loved, he was choked with sobs; then, with boyish instinct, fled from the crowd, seeing no one.

He cared not which way he took—he wished only to be alone. The house stood near the end of the village next the trail to the meadows and the woodland beyond, which seemed to offer the most ready escape; and with long, quick strides Kin-da-shon took this path.

He had but passed the house, when, even occupied as he was with his own emotions, his attention was caught by the low, agonized groans of Sha-hehe. Suddenly, with the recognition of the whereabouts of the witch, came the mingled feelings of horror at her fearful league with devils, the keen personal grief it had brought to himself, the loss to the whole people in the death of so good a chief, and the consequent succession to his power of a reprobate like Yealh-neddy, who would never hesitate to sacrifice the good of the people to his own selfish ends. No one could tell where the evil might stop—it never *could* be stopped unless witchcraft were made more and more terrible, so that weak and evil persons would be more fearful of the torture than of the evil spirits who drove them to such deeds of darkness.

In the mind of Kin-da-shon there was no doubt at this moment that the witch was suffering more torment from the devil, whose influence she had in an evil hour yielded herself to, than from anything which had been inflicted by her friends; he believed that neither she nor the community could find rest from this destroying spirit's awful power until her blood had been shed. With the loss of each life-drop the demon's possession would be diminished; and then, if she would but arise with honest strength of purpose, why might she not cast off his evil influence entirely?

Unconsciously Kin-da-shon had stopped in the path

just where the sound of her groanings had first reached him. The force of these thoughts had held his steps; now his hand was on the knife in his girdle, and without a moment's hesitation he sprang to the side of the witch, and with flash-like movements drew the keen edge of the blade across the girl's arm and thigh—once—twice—with the expression of one set on a revolting task. The blood streamed out, and, flowing down over the bruised and nettle-stung body, entered the hard bed of earth beneath.

Kin-da-shon's face was ashen white. The sensitive mouth, which had been throughout the deed set in hard, rigid lines of desperate determination, now fell into a piteous quiver, and, with a moan scarcely less agonized than Sha-hehe's had been, he dashed down the path toward the meadows. Reaching a point where the rushes grew rank and high, he left the path, and diving into the thicket, threw himself down with his face to the earth, utterly overcome with the reaction which his gentle nature was undergoing after the strain of forced hardness. So strong and yet so weak, so hard and yet so tender, so cruel and yet so loving!

Before the arrival of the canoes from up the river Kahsha had grown restless at Kasko's slow coming, and had sent Tashekah, as much for her sake as his own, to run along the trail and learn the cause of his delay.

Kasko was still asleep with his brown face on his folded arms when Tashekah came up. At the sight of him her face lighted with pleasure and a mischievous twinkle in the bright eyes. Softly she seated herself at his back, just near enough to reach his ear, or cheek, or nose, with the seed end of a long stalk of the blue grass growing about them so luxuriantly.

Sitting perfectly still, she began to sing a buzz-fly song, very soft and low at first, but coming nearer by rounds

and rounds, as though on wing; at the louder, *close* approaches she touched his face with the delicate, tickling grass, laughing inwardly to see him stir, squirm, strike at the offending insect, while the uninterrupted buzz grew fainter and more faint again.

After much of such annoyance Kasko turned over on his back, and clasping his hands under his head and drawing up his knees into comfortable fashion, gave vent to a prolonged, waking sigh, at which his laughing sister leaned over and looked him in the face.

"Oh! you little sand-fly! how came you to me to bite? Wasn't there enough to eat over there in the village?"

"Not of what I like; you know they don't allow us to eat anything sweet or anything out of the salt water, and that's just what I want now, and the only thing I shall want till the fast is over; then I shan't at all care."

"Well, if that's your case, little Contrary, you had better call yourself a *grown-up* and eat *nothing* for four days."

"Oh, no, brother mine; not just yet; it's hard, very, to eat; but I'll be strong to do it," was the laughing reply.

"Say, have the 'up above' folks come yet, Tashekah?"

"They hadn't come, but I heard the shout and then the crying just after I crossed the sand; they are in the house some time now."

"Then you didn't see Kin-da-shon?"

"No."

"Well, let us go; I want to see him."

Having tied his kerchief turban-fashion about his head, Kasko adjusted his pack and took up the march, with Tashekah and his blanket bringing up the rear.

They had not proceeded far when they heard a call, and looking back saw the troop of children just entering

the trail from the woodland. Their out-runners soon overtook the brother and sister, and all went on together, laughing and chatting by the way.

Thus they pass within hearing of Kin-da-shon, still prostrate. He has lain like a stone except for the occasional nervous shiverings which come as ague chills. The voices of Tashekah and her brother are the first call to life; they rouse him from what he thinks must have been almost death. He is numb, stiff, and cold; yet now comes a tingling sensation throughout his body, and with some effort he pulls himself up into a sitting posture.

He will speak—call Kasko; but as the word is forming on his lips he hears the other voices—the children's—and he shrinks back into the grass until they have passed.

As the little party enters the village the people are gathering to the house of mourning for the evening's ceremony—the smoking, the rehearsal of the old chief's greatness, the recalling of his virtues, and the bewailing his death.

The widow has taken her place near the corpse, and her tribal friends soon fill that side of the room.

Near the chief's body, on the other side, are his sisters and brothers and their tribal friends. The great house is soon filled. The faces of all are black, but the painting of the men is hideous—it is black, broken with streaks of vermillion.

Kush-kwa, chief of the widow's tribe, is master of ceremonies until after the cremation of the body, when the new chief will begin his administration with the feast which is to make all the mourners glad again. When all are seated in silence, at a signal from Kash-Kwa a large carved box is placed before him by Ka-tah-wa, a fifteen-year-old nephew of the dead chief. It is filled with pipes of grotesque designs. Selecting one of

very large size, the chief gives it to Ka-tah-wa, who, kneeling, fills it with tobacco from the tray with which his cousin Chan-ka has followed him.

Chan-ka had placed the tray near the box of pipes, and now turns with a handful of little resinous sticks toward the low fire; picking up a small coal in his fingers, he applies one of his lighters, and with a long, slow blow, has it quickly ignited. Ka-tah-wa has placed the large pipe in his mouth and draws, while Chan-ka holds the light to the tobacco. As soon as it is going the pipe is given to Kush-kwa, the chief, who, sitting still, smokes for some time—smokes slowly, vigorously, and silently; then in the same silent way passes it to the man of highest rank in the dead chief's tribe, who smokes it in like manner and passes it on. In this way the sign of sympathetic fellowship is given. While the chief's great pipe is thus passing from one to another of the mourners, arranged always in order of caste, the boys are filling the other pipes, placing them, as they are made ready, on another large carved tray.

When the great pipe has been smoked by the head men all and at last reaches Kush-kwa again, Ka-tah-wa takes up the tray and serves a pipe to each adult in the house, Chan-ka following with the lights, and in a short time all are engaged in this voiceless offering.

When Kush-kwa's pipe is finished it is replaced in the box by Ka-tah-wa, and the chief, with a few preliminary beats on the floor with his long, carved walking-stick, sends out the introductory notes of the chant. The time-beat is taken up immediately by the other men with sticks, and with bows so bent under the foot that one end, guided by the hand, springs to the floor with just the power desired, low or loud. The leader now in wailing minor notes, with strange but perfect rhythm, recounts the scenes

of the accident and its sad sequel; now and again from out the audience comes a response—an ejaculation—flowing into the unbroken speech of the leader as water into water.

As the story reaches its close the strain is lifted by a hundred voices; the women sway to and fro, beating on their breasts and joining, in more shrill tones, the heavy voices of the men in the chanting, wailing cry. Every surprise of contortion and sound renders the cadence more clear, the rhythm more pronounced. Tears flow—rather they *gush*—from every eye, as though controlled by automatic flood-gates; for, having reached the point where the next speaker takes up the genealogy of the deceased chief, his story flowing smoothly out of the chorus without break or interruption, every eye is dry, and, in the most matter-of-fact manner and every-day tone of voice, one woman asks another for her wad of spruce chewing-gum or ground tobacco and bark snuff.

The children have been crowded in among the women, and their piping little voices have joined in the crying of the people.

Tashekah has found herself pressed on one side by Shaga-uk, Kin-da-shon's mother, and on the other by Sa-allie, the wife of Ka-kee, the medicine-man.

Sa-allie's face is not at all like her husband's; it is round and rosy, though its roses are hidden just now by the black paint; it is fat and laughing, except just while the crying lasts.

In her capacious lap she holds two nursing children, one not yet two years old, the other about four.

The sweet, simple, but womanly manners of Tashekah have quite won the hearts of both the children and their mother, while the soft, motherly ways of Sa-allie have warmed the heart of the motherless girl. It is not long

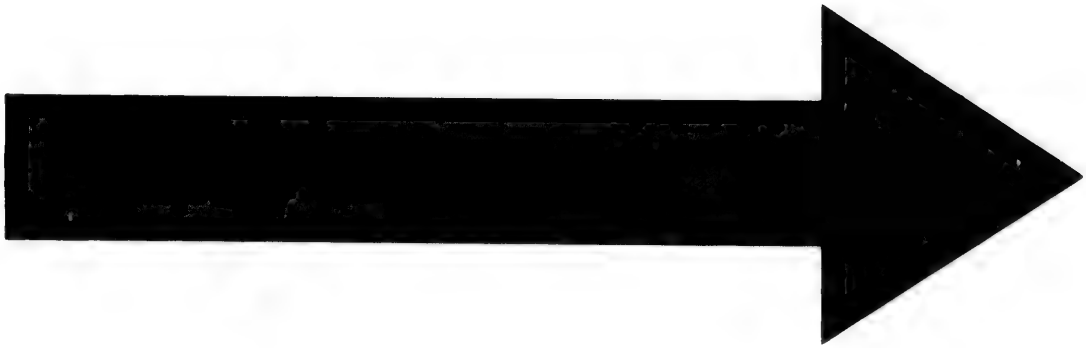
until the four-year-old Ch-one slides sleepily into the girl's lap, and she, glad at his confidence, softly caresses the boy, covering him, as heavier sleep falls, with a part of her own blanket.

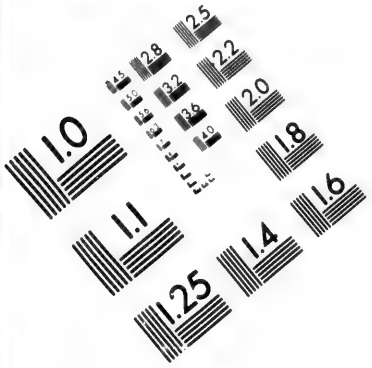
Before the night's performance closes, Sa-allie has reached a very important conclusion, and has formed a plan which, if carried out, means much to Tashekah and still more to Kin-da-shon; but of this Sa-allie knows nothing.

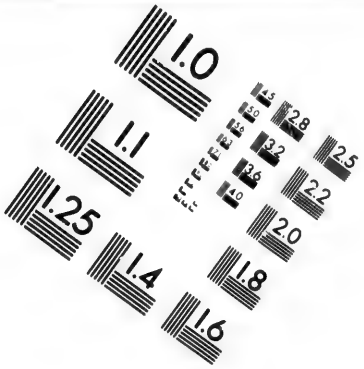
To Sha-ga-uk, preoccupied with her own disappointment and resentment, Tashekah was simply one of the many children about whom she knew little and cared nothing. Absorbed in her thoughts for her son, Kin-da-shon himself was unmissed, and when, late in the evening, he wedged himself into the outer circle of the crowd within the house, he was as unnoticed by his mother as by Tashekah. Kin-da-shon, on the contrary, saw them both, and the sight—seated as they were, as if of one house—filled his heart with a gladness that for the time crowded out the bitterness which so lately had bowed him to the earth.

The night's rehearsal is closing now with the calling of the names of all living relatives to the departed chief. Throughout the night one after another of his friends has taken up the story of his exploits, always in time with the continued monotonous rise and fall of the beating sticks and bows, intermingled with the wailing of the mourners.

Morning now brings the dispersement of the people, and to them the sleep of exhaustion, with no breaking of their fast.



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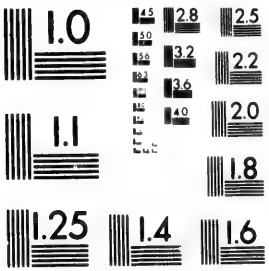


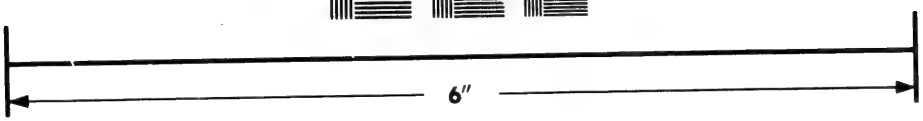


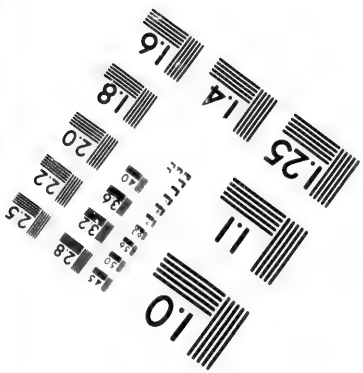


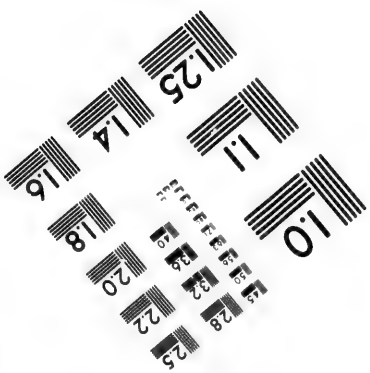


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## CHAPTER IX.

### CROSS-PURPOSES.

"TO take another wife has been long in your heart, my husband. Why?" Ka-kee is no little surprised at the question. He has several times in the course of their married life spoken of taking an *assistant* for his *wife*, but she met the suggestion always with indifference, or with a touch of ridicule or anger.

Circumstances have not wholly favored his scheme, and his domestic relations have been so entirely comfortable that he has hesitated about increasing his importance at the cost of peace.

It is near the close of the fourth day of mourning for Chief Kood-wot that Sa-allie, after much deliberation and growing self-approval, has entered on the task of appearing to yield to her husband's ambition, and at the same time to shrewdly bring about just what she herself now most truly desires.

"So much you have talked about this thing I'd like to know what you want a wife for. Is it because I don't scold enough? If that is it you will never have to ask for any more of the sweet bitterness—if you will just take a wife who will bring plenty of blankets with her. She won't let any of us forget that she brought them, and it won't be long, either, before she will think she brought us all we have. Is it a rich wife you want, Ka-kee?"

"No; I can't say that I have thought so much of what she would bring me," hesitatingly answered the husband.

"Is it for *work?*—for gaining trade with the Stick peo-

ple, maybe? I say, Ka-kee, her friends will give you more trouble than the trade is worth, and they will cost you more than she can ever gain for you."

"I know that. I would not have a Stick woman, but a man is worth more among his own people if he has more than one wife; and if she were of the right sort, Sa-allie, she would be a help to you—with the children, and your yarn-making and basket-weaving, and *all common* work, so that you would have more time for your dancing-blankets. It is not every woman who can do the beautiful work that you can; and you ought not to have the *mean* work," he added flatteringly.

"Well, where *is* one of the right sort? I'd like to see her," says the wife complacently.

"I haven't seen her yet, myself; at least, not that I am sure of," the medicine-man made reply. "It might be best to take a young one and bring her up to our liking."

"And to have any help with the children I should say it would be just as well not to wait till they are all grown up."

As Sa-allie speaks, her son Kunz appears in the doorway—the ready-tongued, laughing-eyed Kunz, leader among the children of the village, with his baby brother on his back and humming a gay little tune as he comes.

"What a great, tall fellow Kunz is growing to be! It won't be long that he will carry babies," proudly sighs the mother.

"No: but it will be because the babies are all men, if they grow as fast as this one. Neh! but he's a heavy one!" and he swings him down to the mother's lap.

"Where is your brother Ch-one, Kunz?"

"Oh, we ran against Kah-sha's girl down by the rocks, so she and Ch-one smiled at each other, and, like two icebergs touching, nothing can part them again."

"Where are they now?"

"Sitting down there, where the tide has left the beach clean. I wish we had a sister like her! I wouldn't mind staying with her myself."

Ka-kee glances at his wife with a keenly alert expression, but nothing in her placid face betrays her interest. She is only saying, with a smile, to Kunz:

"But *Kasko's* sister you *do* mind staying with? Well, didn't the baby want to stay, either?"

"That's just it. *He's* the one that didn't want to stay, because he needs to eat; but I left my heart down there. I'm going back to hear another story. She's telling Ch-one many things old, but her tongue seems new. I like to lie on the sand and listen: her voice is like the robins in the new of the year."

With this the boy is off again; with light, fleet steps he soon reaches the group of children on the low, smooth beach.

Tashekah, in the abandon so loved by the native, lies lengthwise, digging her toes into the warm sand, her dark and shining head uplifted as she rests on her elbows, playing with a stray bit of sea-weed and the cockle-shells which Ch-one's chubby hands have gathered.

Ch-one lies quite near the story-teller, losing not a word. A number of other boys and girls are gathered about in various attitudes of comfortable enjoyment.

"Tell more!" and "Yes! tell another!" they are clamoring as Kunz comes within hearing.

"Wait till my five ears get there," he shouts.

"Five? Where do you keep them?" laughingly they demand.

"Well, I've got just as many as any of you; and you're all listening with mouth and eyes as well as with the things on the sides of your heads. Go on, Tashekah; tell about the owl—how she came to be a witch."

In a simple, elder-sister fashion, the girl takes up the story.

"Ch-au-k, long, long ago, in the place of the Sitka people, an old blind woman lived with her son and his wife.

"They had no garden; the medicine-spirit kept the fish from running, and there was only a little to eat in all the country. All the people were hungry.

"Every day the young man went to hunt or to fish, and found nothing. He was almost starved, and his old mother was hardly kept alive by the roots and few berries they could find. But all this time the young wife kept fat and well; nobody knew what gave her flesh and strength.

"In the night, when the old woman would wake from sleep because her food-bag was eating her up, she would say to her son's wife:

"'What have you got there to eat?'

"'Nothing,' she told her husband's mother.

"'Oh, yes, you have; I smell fish, and I hear its grease dropping on the fire.'

"'No, you don't,' the daughter would answer. Then the old woman would lie quite still and seem to sleep, till she heard the sounds again. Then she sat up and looked hard with her poor blind eyes, and asked again:

"'What are you eating? You have fish; I hear you eating it.'

"'No, I'm only chewing gum,' the young woman said."

"What *was* she eating, Tashekah?" asks Ch-one.

"Wait a little and I'll tell you. She had witches' power, and always, when it got to the middle of the night, she went to some rocks that hung over the sea. Close to the edge she went, with branches from the alder trees, and swept them back and forth before her; she crossed them

and crossed them back again—this way; and the little herring, that were so afraid they hid in the bottom of the sea where nobody could get them, felt her strength and couldn't help coming to the top of the water. Then when they saw the witch-woman standing there, with her hair all hanging long about her, and the tree boughs waving to and fro with more and more power, they leaped from the water and flung themselves at her feet. She then put them into her basket and took them home. She put them on the sticks and set them up to roast by the fire.

"When they were cooked she ate all she wanted and went to sleep.

"This was the way things went on for a long time, till one night the old woman's questions and cries for food made her son's wife so angry that she snatched a fish from the stick, tore out its burning entrails, and ran to the old woman, saying, 'Hold your hand; you *shall* have some;' and she took the shaking old hand, filled it with the bad hot stuff, and strongly held it shut in her own, till the hand was burned to the bone.

"The young man had been out all night trying to find food. When he came home in the morning he asked his wife what made his mother sit crying so. 'She did not know,' she said.

"He did not believe her words, and his heart was to ask his mother; so he said to his wife:

"'I'm going hunting again; go you to the woods and get bark lining to tie my arrow-heads with.'

"While she was gone the old woman told her son all her troubles, and he soon knew what to do.

"When his wife came back with the bark strings he took his bow and started off in his canoe as if he must go a long way from home. But as soon as he got around a bend in the shore, so the village eyes could not reach him,

he went ashore and hid his boat in the bushes. He went into the deeper woods till the day should go to sleep.

"At last the night came, and he crept out and along the shore to a place where he could see the village when the moon made light.

"About the middle of the night the moon was bright and full, and he could see his bad wife leave their house and go swiftly to the rocks. He watched her through all her evil work, and softly followed her back to the house. He saw her cook her fish and eat them. He heard his mother cry for one mouthful of food, and heard his wife's hateful, lying words.

"Then, without making any sign, he went back to his canoe. He caught a hair seal the next day and he took it home. He made his wife eat so much of the fat that she went into a sound sleep. She slept so hard that when the night-time came she could not wake up.

"It was nearly morning when her husband shook her, and told her to go down to the canoe and bring up the fish that he had just brought home.

"He had stolen her witch power and went to the rocks. He took a canoeful of fish while she was sleeping.

"His wife was weak and angry. She went down to the canoe without any baskets, and sat down on the beach like a heavy cloud.

"Then she called to her husband to send the baskets down, and her voice was very weak when she called. Her husband wouldn't send the baskets, and she wouldn't go to get them; so she sat all day on the sand.

"That night, when the moon got big, the woman started toward the mountain. She was going to follow the canyon to the top; but when she got to a big rock she sat down to rest, and all at once she turned into an owl—the nasty, hateful, ugly thing!

"It sleeps all day and all night it works bad things, and tells everybody, 'Your father's a witch—your father's a witch!' That's the reason that men and women talk back strong words to it, and say, 'Oh, you shut up your throat! You burnt your mother's fingers!'"

"Is all the owls that bad woman, Tashekah?" queried little Ch-one.

"Yes, all of them. They got bad spirit—witch spirit."

"Will they hurt Ch-one, sure—true?" he asks again, with wide-open eyes.

"Yes. They always want to hurt every little child; they are too big cowards to hurt big men and women. He just gives *them* bad talk, and he comes to their house-trees and cries. Everybody runs out to stop his telling that somebody is going to die—but just the same he knows everything."

"Yes, and he's a big thief, too. It's just like he hides things under his blanket, then shuts his eyes, just as if he never waked up at all. He's just full of lies—no good words in him!" says Kunz, looking up at his father, whose curiosity has brought him out in search of the children, and among whom he has seated himself with much ease.

"Whose name is that you've hung in the smoke, my son?" Ka-kee asks. "The Raven's?"

"No; not the Raven's this time," replies the boy; "only the owl's."

"Oh! you can't make him worse than he is, the coward! He wants every boy and girl he sees. His witch power catches them when they go out of the house at night; he turns their hearts upside down, and if nobody saves he takes them off to die. But the great medicine-spirit gives me charms for all things, you know; that's all that can save any from death-spirits that are everywhere hungry for life."

As he speaks the medicine-man fixes his snaky eyes on Tashekah, who at first shrinks and drops her eyes; then, with no less horror or shrinking, meets his gaze with a yielding as to power supernatural. She longs to get away, yet she seems powerless to move. She longs unutterably for her father to come, or even Kasko; but, for all appearance of life about the village above, every one there may be as dead as Kood-wot himself.

One by one the other children, finding that Tashekah will entertain them no more, betake themselves to other scenes of interest. But Ch-one, jumping to his feet, puts out his baby hands and grasps hers, saying:

"Come, good girl; come with Ch-one and find more cockles. Ch-one wants you—come!"

Eagerly, and not without fear of being detained, Tashekah rises to her feet and follows whither the child may lead.

Ka-kee has no desire to prevent this; indeed, he is best pleased to have her go, giving him thus the opportunity of seeing her as she walks away along the beach, strong, erect, and free-footed.

"By the ravens! it's a piece of good luck for me. In a year or two she will be as fine a woman as any in the Chilkat country. I must lose no wind that can fill my sails. Kah-sha leaves after to-morrow's feast. I'll talk with him before he goes." So determines the medicine-man, rising now to join the crowd already moving toward the house of Kood-wot for the last night of mourning preceding the burning of the body.

The house is soon filled, and the business for which the company has assembled is conducted exactly as it has been during the three evenings previous.

During these days and nights that have intervened since Kotch-kul-ah learned her fate as decided by her relatives,

she has thought and planned and developed as she never did before. Scheme after scheme has been dreamed out, thought over, and rejected as impracticable.

To-night she finds herself almost back at the beginning, with no further plan than just that of getting away from this house, from this village, of hiding from the hateful creature who is to claim her as his wife, and from the people—his own and hers—who would force her to yield to him or to death!

Of the two she prefers death, but she wants to live; and the hope will fly along before all plans—the hope of some day being happy with Kin-da-shon, though *how* such a thing can ever be passes the power of her imagination. To get away, to securely hide—that is all that she can see now; and whether or not she can do so much as this must soon be put to the test.

To-night Kin-da-shon and Kasko, coming in early from a walk in the meadows, have, all unconsciously, seated themselves close against the rude partition of Kotch-kul-ah's closet, somewhat apart from other occupants of the house, that their low-toned conversation may be uninterrupted as long as possible.

Kin-da-shon's voice, musical and low, is at once recognized by Kotch-kul-ah. She has seen him several times since his arrival, herself unseen, but not before has he spoken within her hearing, and his tones thrill her in a way which she could not describe or explain better than in the words she whispers to her own heart: "His spirit shakes me!"

His words have been lost in this joyous tumult, but another voice now speaks:

"I can't help it, brother-friend. There has come over my heart the shadow of the Raven. I wish you and my father would not go to the south country."

"If it be the Raven, how will our staying help it, Kasko, little brother?"

"I know not—only this I know, that I want us to be together when trouble comes. But I want to tell you now—we may not be so well together again—a thing that has made me many thoughts, but until now no words.

"You have heard that my mother in a dream received the spirit of a great medicine-man who had long before passed out of his body and never found one wise or good or beautiful or powerful enough to give the spirit to again, until my mother. She was good and beautiful, but had no power. The awful spirit possessed her, and when she gave me birth her own spirit was not found.

"I grew, they say, as one with *two* mothers. My hair was, at the first, as long as a baby's finger and curly as a medicine-man's. It would never have been cut but for my father's daring. He would not have me an Icht, and the spirits are no doubt angry with him. Do you know, Kin-da-shon—let me whisper, and don't speak it again—the day we came here my father seemed weak, and before I got the canoe to bring him across the sands he lay down on the grass to rest, and his cough hurt him.

"The next day I went back to hunt the charm-stone he had lost from his pouch. I found it just where he had been lying when he coughed so hard and turned over—and something else, O brother!—I found *blood!—red blood!*—dried on the grass!

"I must save him, Kin-da-shon. Every one has said that the Icht whose spirit was given to me was much greater than any medicine-man living now. If *these* can *save*, then much more may *I*—if I give myself to the spirit power.

"Always I have felt a large life in me—a strength that no other boy seemed to feel. My father told me I felt so

because I only measured with Tashekah—she being sweet and gentle. But for some moons now I have felt other things, and have tried to think them out, *without* father or Tashekah or anybody.

"Everything is all wrong; you see that everywhere. I see it, too. I don't understand, and I can't at all see what I can do to make anything right; but, you see, if any change can ever be made, it is only a medicine-priest of terrible power with the demons who can do it. If that is the only hope of our people, and if such a power is mine, how can I hide it? It will destroy me and all I love."

"*Will* you, Kasko—will *you* be a medicine-man?" Kin-da-shon asks anxiously.

"I must—I *must* be one. My father needs me; Tashekah will need me; even you may need me, and everywhere my people are needing me. I feel many things that I cannot speak, my older brother"—burying his face to choke a sob, then going bravely on: "It is not the medicine-men that we *have* who can make great changes for this people. They love their houses; they have wives and children. They love many blankets; they rob the poor and sick. You and I have both seen them left to die in the cold while the Icht has stuffed his treasure-house with their blankets."

"That I'm sure *you* could never do, Kasko, my tender heart! You are swift and brave and strong as the eagle, and tender as a mother seal!"

"It must be because my Icht is greater than theirs. I'm glad I began to speak to you, Kin-da-shon; it is helping me to see through the fog. I begin to understand better what I must do—and I must not wait for a fuller moon. I will go to the mountains. The lynx, the wolf, shall be my only friends till I find the power to overturn

evil. My father must not know this, Kin-da-shon. I adjure you, tell him no word that you have heard of me. He had hidden from us all that he had been struck by a spirit of darkness. Yet he is bent with fear and pain—you see that! Take care of him, Kin-da-shon; help him when he cannot know it. The journey will be long, but you will bring him again to his own house; and I—I will leave no hard thing undone to gain power to save him."

"When will you leave the village, Kasko?"

"I must see my sister safe in our father's house first. We can start back at once, when you have gone. Then my Icht shall guide me. I can tell you nothing more, brother mine!"

For the past few moments the conversation has been carried on in such covered whispers as might not attract the attention of the people now closely seated all about the boys. Kotch-kul-ah is their only listener; to her hearing, now doubly acute, their words are clearly distinct.

Their attention now is caught by individuals in the crowd. Yealh-neddy has taken a place, with his usual leer.

"When you are an Icht, Kasko, I only hope that power may be found to take the demon which *that* evil eye shows." Kin-da-shon speaks bitterly.

"Yealh-neddy? Yes, I hate him as much as you can. I pity the girl that has her life bound in his bundle. I think *I* would kill myself!"

"She was so pretty, too!—not sweet, like Tashekah, but bright as the stars on a frosty night; no mud or fog about her; and she was a friend worth having."

"Could she be willing, do you think, to be given to such a fellow?"

"No; I could be sure of that. There was no vileness

in her heart to meet his. She will *hate* him! And I will not slip, if, with her spirit, she——"

Her senses are strained to the uttermost to catch it, but not another word reaches her. Has he not finished the sentence? What does he think she may do? Does he wish her to break these bonds, and does his wish go farther than to have her free?

At least he has not forgotten her, and he has spoken good and honest words of the past—the happy past—the ages ago when they were children.

"Pretty—bright as the stars!" he said. How she thrills again as she recalls his words. But—"not sweet like Tashekah," he said that too. What does that mean? And a jealous pang shoots through the sweetness that has filled her heart for a moment—a pang that must be argued down.

He hates Yealh-neddy; and "Kotch-kul-ah is a friend worth having." "No mud or fog about her; nor vileness; bright as the stars on a frosty night." Ah, yes; he said all that, and he did not lie. That was better than being "sweet like Tashekah." Kin-da-shon *meant* that it was better; he could not speak all his heart to Kasko!

Eagerly, greedily, the girl gives herself to the influence of this stimulant. With Kin-da-shon's love she can die or live insensible to pain. Her perplexity and wearing anxiety are gone now, as though forever; though what she *can* do is still an unanswered question.

The night has worn on, the crying is hushed; except, indeed, the widow's—that goes on now, until the cremation has taken place. The little ones and most of the older people have covered their faces, and, without leaving their seats, sleep heavily.

Suddenly a peculiar, prolonged cry is sounded by the widow, greeting the early morning, and calling the

mourners to the performance of the last sad duty to the dead.

In a united crying the people respond, and the widow's tribal friends proceed to the place of burning to build the fire, while her brothers and near friends make the body ready for removal in a blanket stretcher.

To the corners of this litter ropes are attached, by means of which it is drawn up through the large smoke-escape, received on the roof, and lowered from thence to the waiting carriers on the path, who lead the procession of friends to the place prepared at the entrance of the meadows.

Kotch-kul-ah walks near her mother and joins in the crying. The pyre is reached, and the body is soon placed in position, well wrapped in blankets. Boxes of food are also placed on the wood, where they will be consumed for the use of the spirit.

As the fire is lighted the crying becomes more loud and the muscular demonstrations of the mourners more violent, increasing as the sickening odors indicate that the flames are now devouring the body.

The widow Kah-da-guah has two daughters younger than Kotch-kul-ah, who were given several years ago to their mother's sisters for succeeding wives to their respective husbands. These little girls are among the mourners, and are now brought near the burning pile that they may comb their hair and cast the vermin into the fire, so that henceforth they may be free from such invaders. Failing to take such precaution, the plague will follow them all their lives long.

At last the task is completed. Smouldering embers and whitened bones lie in a low, pathetic heap. A little box made for the purpose is brought forward to receive the only visible remains of him who had been chief of the

village Yhin-da-stachy. These are picked out by the women with exceeding care and are placed in the box, which is borne now to one of the "dead-houses" back of the village, and left among the many similar boxes already there.

This housing is but a temporary one, however. By another summer the sisters and brothers of the departed chief will have completed a new house as a memorial in their ancestral village Kutwulhtoo; then will be brought this box, with many honors—with singing, dancing, and feasting—during which the widow's tribe shall be the guests and receive pot-latch gifts.

The ashes of the dead disposed of, the mourning is at an end, and all who have participated in the ceremonies must now pass through a general cleansing process, the women and girls going for the purpose to the widow's house, the men and boys to another. Into each of these houses is carried a canoe, which is now half filled with water. When the fires have been started, many stones as large as a man's fist are brought in and placed in the fire to heat; when they are sufficiently hot and have been dropped sizzling into the canoe, the public bath is ready for use; and every man, woman, and child, beginning with their head, removes all trace of paint and grief by a thorough scrubbing of the entire body. The old clothing is also removed from sight, and each person is enrobed in something good and new—their best.

The house is set in order and preparations are made by the tribe of the dead chief for the feast by which the long fast is to be broken. Many baskets of fish are set boiling, large boxes of berries in oil are brought out from the storehouses. With great horn spoons, holding a quart or more, these berries are dipped out into the various

totem dishes of the different families, who for this occasion have brought their own.

Each family has a dish, about which they gather with their large individual spoons. The only exception to this order is Widow Kah-da-guah herself, who sits apart from the others and has her right hand so bandaged, in token of her broken life, as to render it useless, and it must be so carried for two weeks. During this first two weeks, also, she must not chew on the right side of her mouth. Then her hand is released, and for two weeks she shall not chew on the left side of her mouth. She will then be free to take her new husband. Among other signs of her bruised and bereaved heart, soon after the spirit of her husband Kood-wot had gone her breast was scratched with a stone, and the stone then bound over it.

The bitter berries and oil are served to all as a first course, after their fast, and are followed by the boiled fish to all but the widow. She is given *dried* fish and oil as a second course—as eating boiled fish will cause a widow's head to loosen and shake from side to side.

The day has grown cloudy and has closed in shadow before all the people have been fed. There is much bustle and stir made by Yealh-neddy and his friends in bringing out the goods he means to give away to-night as his share in the ceremonies.

There are bales of Hudson Bay blankets and several bolts of white cotton and prints stacked in the two back corners of the room.

The dishes and remaining supplies of food are thrust out of the way on to wide, rude shelves over the doorway and, at each side of it, over the low anterooms, where in winter stores of fuel are kept a day or two in advance of demand, but are now filled with paddles and other belongings of the many guests from other villages.

With the clearing away of the food a large drum or tambourine, owned by the medicine-man, Ka-kee, is brought in and suspended by a rope thrown over one of the high beams. A man of Yealh-neddy's tribe seats himself a little back of the fireplace, from which the fire has been carried out and fresh gravel strewn where it had burned, in order that the space may be utilized as standing-room for the distributors of gifts. The drummer's place is midway between the stacks of goods, and drawing the drum toward himself with one hand, he beats his tattoo with a single stick.

In a short time every available inch of floor space is occupied by the curious crowd—the women and girls on one side of the house, while the men and older boys fill the other.

The house seems packed, yet others coming later somehow find an entrance, and children are passed over the heads of the seated multitude to find places where they may serve as wedges. Even the partition which had shut off Kotch-kul-ah's closet has been taken down to increase the room. Many of the boys have found a sitting on the great timbers which cross the house, and on the tops of the anterooms, pushing back, but not out of reach, the boxes of food so hastily stored there, and for which they frequently during the night show a true boy's affinity.

There is no dancing during this feast, so the work of distributing the gifts is with the simple accompaniment of the drum.

Six men take their places, three on each side of the drummer, but nearer the middle of the room, ready to receive and tear the goods.

In front of them stands Ka-kee himself, with a long, slender rod, to one end of which is fastened a hook most beautifully fashioned as a crane's head. It is of horn,

exquisitely polished, and with eyes of green shell inlaid, the hook being formed by the curve of the delicate neck and the long, slender, partly opened bill. By this the gifts are caught and conveyed to the eagerly expectant people.

Women seated by the stacks of goods now begin to take them out piece by piece. First a bale of blankets is opened in each corner, and from each simultaneously is passed one blanket at a time to the men in waiting—two of whom take it by opposite corners, while the third stands with a sharp knife and cleaves the selvage enough to tear; then the two pulling divide the blanket into a number of long strips. These are placed in a heap at Ka-kee's feet and are by him passed on the hook to members of the opposite tribe.

During the tearing of the blankets the women helpers have been busy with the prints and muslins, rolls of which have been undone and lie in loose heaps.

When the first bale of blankets has been disposed of, the cotton, held and hanging straight by one edge, is passed hand over hand through the crowd from each corner to the dividers.

The three men on each side stand now in rows, and the goods are passed through their hands, without cutting, until they lie again in great heaps where all can see their magnificent proportions; they are then rehanded, in lengths of four or five feet, by the two men, and cut by the third; then distributed by Ka-kee as the blankets have been.

After the muslin and calico more of the blankets; and after the blankets more of the cotton goods, until all are disposed of.

It would be hard to say whether Yealh-neddy or his vain widow-bride is the more gratified by this display;

but it is in widely different ways that their gratification comes.

Kotch-kul-ah had been obliged to take a part in the performance, though it was no more than to pass through her hands a portion of her master's wealth. She had known that this would be required of her as the ratification of the claim which had been given him. She knew that her escape could not be safely made before this feast was over and the people were asleep; then many hours might pass before her absence would be discovered.

As she fulfilled her part in the feast she was an object of interest to Kasko and Kin-da-shon, who as usual were seated together. Her pallid beauty and full, dark eyes, more than usually brilliant to-night, could not but attract them—and many others also. Yealh-neddy was more than ever arrogant, and more than once the light from his evil eyes seemed to smite the girl.

Among the women who were seated against the wall near Kotch-kul-ah was Kin-da-shon's mother, still nursing her resentment and injured feeling against those whom she regarded as responsible for Kin-da-shon's misfortune and her own disappointment in respect to this girl. To-night, as she saw her stand with dignity, as unconscious as it was genuine and as modest as it was fearless, the mother's heart burned with envy—coveting such a wife for her only son. Each moment the bitterness increased, until, losing sight of the possible consequences, she determined to at least prevent Kotch-kul-ah from ever living with Yealh-neddy; and if such a thing could be compassed, by means fair or foul, to secure her even yet to Kin-da-shon.

As Kotch-kul-ah took her seat, the woman slyly clutched her skirt, and, without attracting the attention of others, succeeded in getting the girl seated close by her side—

the wall at their backs, the goods at one side, so that a few words might be occasionally exchanged without being overheard or remarked upon by those near.

The words of Kin-da-shon's mother, though guarded in tone, were impetuous and burning, carrying to Kotch-kul-ah's fluttering heart all the assurance it needed from an outward source that she was as longed for as she longed to go.

Had her courage for an instant faltered, it now received the stimulus it required. More than that, the future, the "*after* getting away, what then?"—appeared not as the threatening, ominous cloud which from the first had shrouded her proposed flight, but it was even made enticing. Succor from Kin-da-shon's own mother—hiding for a little time—then love—Kin-da-shon's home—shelter—peace—that is what it promised her. Yes, if there were no terror to flee from, that were worth daring death for. Her heart leaps at the thought.

Yet—and a part of the cloud rises again close before her—even though a happy future seems to loom clear beyond it, the hiding that must be first in the woods and the rocks—how *can* she go alone? Owls, goblins, goosh-ta-kahs, evil spirits of every sort swarming about her and infesting every wild and hidden place. If only some one could go with her she should not be so overcome with fear.

She grows cold even while her pulse is quick with joy. She must go, but what may she not see? She could even go with a witch, she thinks; it would be less horrible than to be alone. "A witch?" Yes; she has befriended Sha-hehe a little—would it be any worse to cut her thongs now and take her along?

But Sha-hehe is past going; even should she survive her present torture she will require an old woman's herbs and nursing before she can walk to the beach.

Kotch-kul-ah's thoughts have so engrossed her that she has not noted the progress of the feast. The heap of goods at her side has disappeared; the dividers are still busy, but the last bale of blankets lies before them when she is recalled to present conditions, and notices too that the wind has arisen. Its mournful soughing is now and then broken by angry gusts which carry the gravel and dash it violently against the house, though not a tremor is felt in the heavy, mortised walls.

It is a wild night for a young and tender girl to go out alone.

Crash! Horror! what is that? A gust of wind more violent than its predecessors has dislodged the heavy boards that have served as a smoke-guide on the roof, scattering them in different directions. One is dashed through the great opening, and without a moment's warning has struck the helpless women and children. Many hands have been instinctively thrust out in sudden alarm, but without power to save. Several of the women are severely bruised, but the heaviest part of the blow has fallen on the head of a sleeping child, who for one brief instant opens wide scared eyes with a sharp cry of—

"Tashekah! Tashekah!" which ends in a convulsion.

"O'ah yeat! ah yeat! Ch-one, my son—my baby!" comes in anguish from the mother.

It is Sa-allie with her children, and Tashekah is by her side, having been led in by the unyielding Ch-one to a place by his mother. When the baby had fallen asleep he had been slipped into Tashekah's lap, while Ch-one slyly took the place in his mother's arms. The mother, Tashekah, and the babe have escaped unhurt, while Ch-one —is he killed? From the convulsion he has passed into a death-like stupor.

Ka-kee has stood for a moment like one bewildered—

stunned. The crowd try to get to their feet, one crying one thing, another something else, amid shrieks and groans and shouts until the uproar becomes a bedlam.

In the effort to leave the house many are trodden on; one babe is dropped, and instantly, ere it can be recovered, the little life is gone.

The door is blocked, within and without, by those wanting to leave and those who are more anxious to see what has happened at the other end of the room.

Dazed at the first as others were, Kin-da-shon and Kasko are soon able to take in the situation and see that nothing can be done toward getting the sufferers out until the crowd at the door is dispersed. With a whispered word and then a leap, each boy has swung himself upon one of the long beams of the house, from which, monkey fashion, they assist each other to reach the smoke-escape and so get upon the roof.

Kasko, as he creeps over the fastening of the rope to which the drum is attached, is struck with an idea concerning its use, and seeing that their movements are entirely unnoticed by the crowd below, he severs the rope at the beam, and drawing up the drum, throws the coiled rope to Kin-da-shon on the roof, who quickly has it all beside him, and Kasko follows.

It requires but a few seconds then for Kasko to reach a point a little back from the house—among the dead-houses—and begin to beat a doctor's call on the drum; while Kin-da-shon takes a position in the edge of the crowd, to stimulate the counter-excitement.

The effect is magical; the crowd about the doorway turn and begin to move toward the sound as if charmed.

At the same time a quieting influence is at work within the house. Kah-sha has arisen, and stands beside the dazed Ka-kee. "The child has no air down among the

feet there. You must save him; bring him under the roof hole," he says.

It is just the spur that was necessary to bring the man to his senses, of which he had become bereft on this first stroke of evil to his family. Ka-kee loves his children, especially this baby boy; and it has been a boast which strengthened his power among the people, that his own family had so long escaped plague, accident, and death through his wonderful charms and supernatural influence over the spirits of evil. To-night, in a moment's time, he has been stripped of all feigned strength, and stands as helpless and confounded in the face of personal trouble as the weakest man he has ever robbed under the pretence of giving him aid.

Kah-sha's words arouse him, and instantly, with a piercing shriek, he leaps above the heads of the people; at which the excited mass, startled, surges back and a hush falls upon all.

In a moment more the unconscious child is in his father's arms and is placed in the freer air.

"Clear me room," cries the man. "I'll find this devil, be he in earth or air!" And drawing off his upper garment over his head, he takes from a curious, bead-wrought bag, worn over his breast, a rattle—the insignia of his power!

With even more frantic and horrible gyrations than those he had used over the dying chief, but occupying much less time, his incantation is ended and the swoon—collapse—has succeeded. Where all has been tempest and uproar the silence of the dead now reigns, but it is a silence tense with expectancy.

The spirit of the sorcerer returns. Amid the shiverings of his body the voice comes in those far-away, sepulchral tones which always inspire the people with awe and terror.

"I have found the demon—there!" And springing to his feet, his long, bony finger is thrust out toward a middle-aged woman near the door. His body bends rigidly toward her; his eyes seem to cauterize her every nerve of motion; a deathly pallor overspreads her face; her eyes are distended in horror; but she neither moves nor speaks.

"Take her!" he cries. "That demon will not burn—only drowning can destroy her power."

It is not now a difficult matter to make way through the crowd. Strong men have seized the woman and drag her out of the doorway.

The tide is far out. A heavy stake is soon driven securely into the hard beach, a little more than half-way out, where the returning tide, wave by wave, will rise far above the head of the victim. The unfortunate witch has been found harboring the evil spirit that caused the disaster. And here she is lashed to her stake as Shahehe was to hers.

Having made the witch thus secure to her fate, the slow, sure coming of which will prove her torture, the excitement of the outsiders abates to such an extent that, weary as all the feasters are, they gladly seek refuge from the storm within the sheltering homes of the village.

As one dead still lies little Ch-one, save that now and then a short sigh escapes his white lips. Grimly his father sits watching the child, while the mother, sobbing, crouches over the precious body. Now she puts back his damp hair and covers his brow with kisses, calling over all the pet names she ever gave him.

Tashekah in tender sympathy drops silent tears over the sleeping babe in her lap, and dozes from utter exhaustion.

Wise and kindly Kah-sha remains, and a few other friends; while the multitude have gone to their homes or

rolled themselves up in their blankets here. Already the air is resonant with the signs of heavy sleep.

The little horn dishes of tallow with their twisted wicks have long ago burned out, but Kah-sha has found material to replenish one, and it burns near the sorrowing group.

"I would make his blood run, Ka-kee," Kah-sha says, while fingering gently but intelligently the child's head. "That was a heavy blow. The head bone pushes in. The blood is thick and will spoil in there—better set it moving."

"*See*, Kah-sha," Ka-kee answers in an unusual voice, extending his weak and trembling hand. "Is *that* ready to do such work? If the wind falls before morning he will live."

"*I* can do it," says Kah-sha, not noticing the last remark. "See my hand!" And as he speaks he holds out his firm and well-shaped hand, with a small, sharp knife in its grasp.

"Do it, then, if you like," groans the father; and with a skilful turn of the instrument the deed is done.

A little gentle friction over the surface, a chafing of the hands and feet, and, drop by drop, the slow blood begins to flow from the newly opened wound. A little more, and a small stream of the bright fluid is discharged. Circulation is further stimulated, and wet cloths are bound about the child's head.

His breathing grows more natural, and the color begins to return to the lips. Sleep overpowers the weary watchers, heavy with sorrow.

The tallow lamp burns out.

The village sleeps.

The tide is running in; slowly, surely it creeps up; inch by inch the witch feels it measure her height—doubled and bent back and tied down—ah! there are

not many inches to measure; but it seems to take forever and forever!

The certainty and slowness are terrible. She begins to wish that a huge wave would sweep in and end it all; but no; the wind has fallen, a dead calm has settled on the black sea and on the earth. Only the sky above, which her poor face is forced so pitifully to meet, shows any life.

A streak of color begins to appear over the mountain—morning is near.

Morning? "No!" she cries, with another spasm of terror and pain; "no morning evermore to *me*. Night and demons are where I am going!"

And the tide creeps up.

The village sleeps.

But Kotch-kul-ah has not slept. Covering her head with her blanket, she had settled herself beside her mother soon after the witch's removal from the house. Appearing to sleep, she yet kept watch of all that afterward transpired.

She knew by the sounds outside just where the witch was placed. She saw the work of Kah-sha for the child, and was gratified at its result. Eagerly she watched to see where he put the knife when its work was done; and then, though with an almost uncontrollable restlessness, she kept her position until the last of the group had given satisfactory evidence of being soundly asleep.

Noiselessly and hastily she then made her preparations. Some food in a basket, which would also do for cooking in; several blankets from the undistributed bale; the precious knife and a pair of canoe paddles—these were quickly put together and carried a little distance down the beach.

The tide is higher than she had thought. What if she should be too late?

Dropping everything save the knife, she runs at full speed toward the point where she feels sure the witch has been tied. She has dipped her own feet in the strongly rising waters without having met what she seeks.

"Speak to me," softly but distinctly cries the girl. "I come a friend. I will save you!"

A gurgling moan, almost lost in the low murmur of the tide-waves, is her only answer.

It is enough for Kotch-kul-ah's quick sense. She is at the side of the drowning woman, who is already covered to the throat. A moment more, and it would have been too late to save her.

But in less than a moment Kotch-kul-ah has thrust down through the waters, and the thongs are cut, the bonds are broken. She helps the woman to her feet, and seeing her ready to fall again, the girl clasps her arms about her and whispers words of inspiration and hope.

"I am the daughter of Kood-wot. Yealh-neddy claims me for his wife. I am ready to die first. I have saved you; you can help me. Come, let us go; there is no time to lose. They will sleep long; but we must go at once. Where is a small canoe?"

With passionate energy the woman throws her strong arms about the slight, girlish form and bears her out of the water in which they have been standing, saying as she does so, in quick gasps: "My dear—my chief! I am your slave! My life is yours; no husband holds me; no children are mine. Give me a new name; I am yours. Usha was my husband; he was better than I. He went with your father, our master. Give me Usha's name! Let me go with you! I will bring the canoe—stand you still!" and she places her on the grass.

"Let me get the paddles, then, Usha-shawet; we must be in haste," and they move up toward the village, the

woman somewhat stiffly, but with a tread that shows enduring strength.

Gathering up her large bundle, Kotch-kul-ah follows to the canoe, which has been discovered in the long grass; wishing to save the noise of dragging the boat over the gravel, she deposits in it all that she has brought with her, and takes up one end while Usha carries the other. Between them it is soon launched.

"Get in, Usha, and take the paddle. I can spring in when it is off the sands."

The wind has fallen, the tide is full, and the village still sleeps.

They are off now—two human lives on a wide, dark sea; this frail chip their only trust!

Without home, without God! Ah! but not even a sparrow falls without your Father!

## CHAPTER X.

### PURPOSES NOT CROSSED.

CLEAR and beautiful dawns the morning, but the village of Yhin-da-stachy sleeps long. The tide has well run out again before any one of those who were to have started this morning for Fort Simpson has awakened; and when at last they do arouse, it is with a heaviness of sense that urges no haste. There is a rubbing of eyes, a stretching of limbs, a turning over on the back, a drawing up of the knees, a folding of the arms under the head, and a delicious sense of rest with *time* for rest.

The patient children have long ago finished their sleep, and taking what they wanted of the ever-ready dried salmon, have without ado betaken themselves to the field, wild with joy over the ripening of the first berries.

It is long before Kotch-kul-ah's absence is even noticed, and when it does become known there is only a lazy conclusion that she has gone roaming with the children, and no further thought is given her.

Ch-one has aroused once or twice, speaking a word or two in an intelligible way, taking water in little, slow sips, then dropping off again into what seems almost too still a thing for sleep.

His mother has carried him home in her own arms, leaving Tashekah to follow with the baby.

Once more Ch-one has aroused with his new friend's name on his lips and an appeal in his dull eyes. Tashekah leaves the baby asleep, swinging in his leather ham-

mock; and as she bends over the little sufferer and takes his hand in her own a look of pleased satisfaction comes into his face, and the little hand flutters feebly; then the tired eyes half-close again, and he seems to know nothing more—only, when Tashekah, over-weary, withdraws her hand to move about, the little one shows signs of unrest.

"Leave him not, Tashekah!" the mother, Sa-allie, pleads, thinking of more than the present; "he loves you, and you give him rest."

"I love the child-man, too," Tashekah answers; "but my father goes south to-day, you know, and my brother will take me to my grandmother to-morrow."

"Then Ch-one must die! See how he rests when you are near him, and the quiet heals his hurt. If you go away, his spirit and his blood will make fire enough to take his life. You do not *want* him to die?"

"Oh, no, no! He loves me. He must not die! Surely the great medicine-spirit will help him. I will do what I can; but my father may want me to go and my brother may not like to have me stay."

"We will see to that. Your father is wise and good; he will know what is best, and he will not deny us this help," is Sa-allie's confident reply.

Ka-kee lies curled up on the floor near his little son, still anxious, still depressed. He has heard the conversation between Tashekah and his wife, and resolves to see Kah-sha at once, though his own heart seems to have died. He cares for nothing now; but Ch-one needs the girl; she must stay for his sake.

So when he finds Kah-sha and asks that Tashekah be allowed to remain with them, it is with a sincerity of pleading for the sick child that gains from Kah-sha the consent which otherwise could not have been obtained,

and which now makes Tashekah a member of Ka-kee's household for an indefinite time.

Not a moment is left the child for a farewell talk with her father, between watching Ch-one and the excitement arising from the discovery of the witch's disappearance. For when the tide had bared the place of her stake to reveal, not the stark body of the miserable witch, but the idle, water-curled thongs washed about the stake, almost a panic seized the villagers, and increased manifold the dark forebodings of Ka-kee regarding his son. "Ch-one would die," he thought; "the power of the witch had been beyond their reckoning; she had, by the might of her demon, broken her bonds and become invisible; no doubt she had taken wings and had hovered over them, brooding evil while they slept!"

Not one of all the village, save the poor witch Shahehe, connected Kotch-kul-ah's absence with that of the slave woman. The children were off for all day, and until they returned it would not be known that neither Kotch-kul-ah nor the canoe was with them. Excitement thus centred in the disappearance of the witch.

As the day advances and the wind proves favorable, the men become anxious to get on their way by the afternoon tide; but before it can be thought safe to launch a boat great fires must be made on the beach, and around them the people must dance with incantations, and cast into the devouring flames offerings of various kinds.

This done, all is hurry and rush to get on the tide at its flood. The packs of furs and bundles of dried salmon, blankets, and extra clothing of native-dressed leather are stowed in the bottom of the large canoe. Twelve fine specimens of the Chilkat tribe take their places, with paddles in hand, ready for their leader's signal, while the

boat is held from the willing waves by the arms of stalwart friends, who, at the signal, will push her off.

The leader—and in this case he is also helmsman—is Kah-sha, who stands erect in his place, with a keen eye surveying the preparations and directing a little rearrangement of hastily placed baggage, making it more compact and at the same time trimming the little craft more perfectly. Two square sheets and the poles for their support are also placed where their raising will be the work of a moment when they pass out of the shelter of the bay into the breeze which is sweeping down the channel.

These last arrangements are all but completed, when Kah-sha's attention is suddenly arrested by the appearance of Yealh-neddy, knife in hand, running toward the boat from the direction of Sha-hehe's place of torture. The knife is replaced in its sheath at his belt as he runs, and snatching a bundle from his mother, who has stood silently awaiting him, he dashes into the water, tosses his luggage into the canoe, and with a light spring takes a place near Kah-sha himself. The whole thing has occurred in a moment, and not one of the traders but is taken by surprise.

"I have cut the thongs from Sha-hehe," he calls out loudly, above the noise of the water and the expressions of astonishment. "Cover her and heal her, old woman, against the time I come again. I shall want her then."

Even before the last words are uttered the signal has been given and the boat is off, the rhythmic paddles moving as by perfect mechanism to the measure of their boat-song.

Very soon the sails are hoisted and are caught by the fresh north wind, bearing the little bark rapidly from the sight of those on the shore, who sing them farewell and good fortune.

Among those who watch the departure is Tashekah, with a sick sinking of heart and such a feeling of desolateness and heart-hunger as she never before has known.

She cannot breathe among the people; her heart is dragging her down. She must be alone; and with a slow, heavy step which gradually quickens into a run, she never stops until she has found a hiding-place in the meadow grass for her passion of sobs and tears.

Kasko's attention has been so engaged with the events attending the sailing of the party that he has not noticed Tashekah. When the little sail is lost beyond the hill-projecting shore he turns about, to see women carrying the almost lifeless body of Sha-hehe from the place where she had sunk helplessly down when the thongs were cut by Yealh-neddy. She is now borne to one of the little booth huts used by the women during the seasons of their banishment from the household, and there, on a bed of spruce boughs, covered with an old blanket, the girl witch is laid, with just sense enough remaining to make her think she has reached the beautiful island, without a wonder as to how a witch could get there.

This unreasoning rest and peace is increased when the old herb-woman brings her decoctions and bruised leaves, bathing and poulticing the poor, tortured body, and using over her soft passes of the hand.

There are days of horrid slavery to follow. There are hours of acute physical pain and weeks of suffering to intervene; but just now there is blessed rest without a pang of body or mind for Sha-hehe; though the sight of her thong-cut, bruised, and stabbed body, with the hollow cheeks and discolored, sunken eyes, the protruding tongue, black and swollen, causes a shudder to run through those who look on.

Shans-ga-gate and his wife have no desire to stay after

they have seen Kin-da-shon safely off, and their preparations are made to start immediately on the turn of the tide, after the sailing of the trading party, though the afternoon shadows are lengthening and the wind is in their teeth.

But the shallows are to be poled, whichever way the wind blows, and one night must be spent in camp at the best; so, with but little ceremony, they turn their faces from the village and laboriously paddle out of sight, unsung and unregretted, though Kasko has stood by to kindly see them off, doing friendly little acts toward stowing their belongings into the boat, with a thought of Kin-da-shon doing for *his* father.

When they are gone, something akin to Tashekah's feeling of loneliness steals over the boy—a yearning that leads him to seek the only one dear to him in all this village: the little sister who has all these years been to him as another self, and whom he must soon part with, perhaps forever.

"I will not tell her to-night," he resolves; "no doubt her heart is crying for our father. I will comfort her first. To-morrow morning early we shall start for our own village, and after *that*, what must be known she shall hear."

Walking as he thought, Kasko has hardly noticed whither his steps have been taking him—and indeed he knows nothing of where his sister may be.

"Kasko," calls a voice from the door of a house he has just passed, "where is your sister?"

"I would ask the same of you, friend Ka-kee," the boy replies. "Is she not in your house?"

"She has not been seen since your father left. Ch-one has spoken her name again, and I have come out to seek her. You know, I suppose, that your father gave her to me?"

"What is that you say?" Kasko asks, half-dazed. "What is that you say?"

"You know I have meant for a long time to take another wife. I had the heart yesterday to ask your father for Tashekah, but Ch-one's hurt *killed* it last night, so that it was just before he left to-day that I spoke to him. He said you should leave her here with us; we can talk about the blankets when he comes back."

"Do you mean to say that my father gave you Tashekah for a wife?" fiercely questions the boy, yet with a forcing down of vehemence which his genuine filial love and respect felt instinctively would reflect on his father.

"And what is to say against that? Could *you* find her a more honorable place?" the medicine-man asks, with some pique.

"And my sister is not to go with me to our own place to-morrow?"

"She wants to stay—Ch-one wants her. Tell your grandmother to come and stay a half-moon, and let us talk it over. I will give as much as any who may want Tashekah. She is a good girl—but where can she be? I came to find her."

"*I* will find her," says Kasko coldly.

"Yes; that is good; and bring her to the child—he needs her."

They are near the end of the village, and as Ka-kee turns back toward his own house Kasko strides blindly onward.

It is as though he had been given a blow. "His *little sister* a *wife*—and *Ka-kee's wife!*"

As he walks his rage spends itself, and thoughts more sober follow. "Is it not just as well? He was about to leave her alone with their grandmother. Would she not be more happy here with the children who love her and

with the pleasant-faced older wife? Would it not be better really that she should have what care and freedom this home might give her, than to be shut away alone for so long a time as he knew their grandmother would insist on keeping her? and *then* given, it might be, to—yes, it *might* be to Yealh-neddy himself," and Kasko shudders involuntarily.

Little as he likes the medicine-man, he acknowledges that Tashekah's fate might be vastly worse. As he reaches this state of mind, his eyes downward cast as he walks, he sees in the path at his feet a large scarlet-and-black handkerchief, such as the women delight in as headgear; and picking it up, he recognizes it as one of his father's gifts to Tashekah.

Tashekah must have been here, then! His trained eye soon discovers other signs of a presence near, and in a moment he finds her curled up in the grass, which bends caressingly over her, looking up at him, smiling.

Her eyes are red and swollen, and the poor little mouth quivers piteously as Kasko, sitting down beside her, asks:

"Whence comes rain this summer day?"

Again the floods are loosed; and burying her face in the cool, sweet grass, she sobs out her heart-hunger and its forebodings:

"Our father — Kasko — do you think he will come again?"

"Yes—yes; he will come—three moons, it may be, will first grow and die; but he will come, and many pretty things will he bring you, sister."

"I care not for the things. Yes, I *will* care for them, if he brings them; but I want him not to go!"

"Tashekah, you are not a little child any more; you are nearly a woman now, and you can think strong thoughts. Tears are good, but not to live on; and you must live. I

have something on my heart to tell you, Tashekah; but maybe you are too weak to hear."

"No! no! See! I am strong now! Is it about you, Kasko, or our father? Have you found trouble?"

Little by little, guided by his love, he leads her to a knowledge of his earnest purpose to seek power for the recovery of their father and the blessing of their people.

Tashekah is enthused, and with as strong a heart as his own, deliberately sets her brother apart to this great thing. Sets him apart!—yes, even though it leaves *her* apart—as alone as he—it seems to the child as she crushes down the uprising sob.

"And when shall you go, Kasko? Soon—when you have taken me to grannie?"

"Little sister, yes; and you will be more sad with grannie alone. It were better you should wait for father here."

"And not go with you while I can?" the girl's heart cries.

"Our father spoke of your staying here; he thought best you should. Ch-one wants you, Tashekah," Kasko says, unable to bring himself to say more.

"Then I will stay; my heart shall be strong to do it; and I have been too long away from poor little Ch-one now. Let us go back, Kasko," springing to her feet as she speaks, struggling to bury thought in action.

They have but reached the house of Ka-kee, finding the little sufferer unconscious still, but moaning, and the cheeks flushed and the eyelids quivering, when the anxious mother leaves him to the care of Tashekah and goes out to seek her eldest, Kunz, who has been gone all day, and since the disappearance of the witch the mother heart has been full of unrest about him.

She has not far to go before she hears the laughter

and merry talk of the entire party coming from the woods.

Her fears set at rest, Sa-allie turns and walks on with them for some distance before it occurs to her that if Kotch-kul-ah had gone with the children the returning party is not complete. Addressing Kunz, she asks:

"Who is coming in the canoe?"

"Nobody—what canoe?"

"The old canoe you children always take when you go like this," the mother answers.

"We didn't take any canoe—we couldn't find it anywhere this morning; the witches must have got it, don't you s'pose, mother?"

"You didn't *take* the canoe? You couldn't find it? Where, then, is Kotch-kul-ah?" demands Sa-allie.

"Kotch-kul-ah!" exclaim the children in tones of astonishment and awe, struck by the look of consternation in Sa-allie's face. "Kotch-kul-ah! She hasn't been with us at all."

In a trice the news has travelled from end to end of the village. The people come out from their houses; and whether standing or hurrying hither and thither, the one and all-absorbing theme is the disappearance of Kotch-kul-ah, and the disappearance of the witch, and the disappearance of the old canoe.

"Could it be——" But who can voice the many solutions of the mystery which their superstitions suggest?

Not many hours have passed before it is asserted and believed that during the night the witch was seen to rise up out of the water and fly over to the dead-houses, from which she presently emerged, hovered over the house of the dead chief's widow, and, by demoniacal power, brought to her arms from the room below the helpless Kotch-kul-ah, whereupon she caused the canoe to rise,

pass under, and convey them as on wings over the dark waters, where they eventually disappeared, as a raven, to the opposite distant shore.

Nothing is done toward sending out parties in search until next morning. Then the country between the villages is pretty thoroughly scoured, and the villages themselves soon set agog by the new excitement.

Kasko thus finds himself in the company of the search party going to Chilkoot. Having crossed the portage, the party divides, one half going by land, the other by water—the former making an examination of every dead-house on the route. To insure their own safety they carry a stout rope of sinew, which is to be made fast about the waist of the man who ventures in to examine the boxes of bones and ashes, the other end being held with a strong grasp by the remainder of the party, who stand ready to drag him back if any haunting spirit should prove too powerful for him.

Those who go by water, with the same precaution visit the caves along the shore where the unburned bodies of medicine-men have been laid from time to time through many generations. As these are places peculiarly attractive to spirits of many kinds, every one who is obliged to approach or pass them resorts to means which, it is hoped, will divert the attention of such demons as are disposed to attack the intruders, and appease their anger also.

So as the canoe glides near the sacred and unholy places, eagle's down is blown about through the air on every side by the men, chanting at the same time strange words of invocation. As they proceed bits of tobacco and other delicacies are tossed into the water.

They visit, too, the picture rocks on the right of the Chilkoot channel, where, among the many weird shapes, are two of more than ordinary influence, it is believed.

One is a medicine-man and the other a woman held by enchantment and turned to stone.

The place is approached with the utmost caution and an awe which at times amounts to terror. Offerings and invocations are made before these shapes as to evil gods.

Kasko has for the first time in his life come face to face with these things, and his brave young spirit, though terrified, rejoices at the opportunity of thus coming, before he had expected, into contact with so much connected with the supernatural world. It is as though his undertaking had been blessed—yet who *is* there to *bless* it?

Both parties reach Chilkoot, as all the other parties on this errand reach *their* destinations, without a single discovery as to the disturbance of boxes or bodies or as to the whereabouts of the missing from Yhin-da-stachy. After their return to that place, reporting the ill-success of their labors, there is much excitement; but gradually other happenings place this event in the background, and life goes on much the same as before.

In the mean time Kasko, after rehearsing to his grannie all the occurrences of Yhin-da-stachy, including the departure of his father's party for the south, the detention of Tashekah, and this later matter of interest, unfolds to her his own determination to be a medicine-man, carefully concealing from her, however, the discovery he has made in regard to his father's state of health.

Her approval is warm enough to meet his expectations.

"You are right, Kasko," she says; "and, what's more, another fast has been set for this very moon—the solemn fast to see if the spirit of the great medicine-priest who left this village many years ago will stoop to enter any flesh again. The fast begins to-night."

"How many times have the people tried these fasts and made themselves ready to receive him, grannie?"

"I cannot tell. Every year since before you were born."

"And no one has ever yet got the spirit?"

"Do you forget what I have often told you—that your mother got more than she could keep her own life with? She gave her own for that medicine-spirit in you, boy, yet you have kept it sleeping all these years."

"Yes, yes, grannie; I believe it. I have *felt* the *spirit*, but, oh! I have no *power!* If I could find *that* I would give *my* life for it."

"And how are you to find it? By shooting the eagle and the bear? By lying in wait for the halibut or the seal? By running the country over with Tashekah for lost birds' feathers and rabbits' tails?" she asks with querulous reproach.

"How *can* I get it, grannie?" Kasko asks, with the meekness of true desire; then he adds: "These things which you despise may have helped me to *want* to know."

"How to get it is not what you have been *long* wanting to know. With all the fasts since you came into the world, not once has any one got a true sign of that power; yet *you* could never be persuaded to give yourself to the trial. Can you do it now? It may be nine or ten days without eating or drinking before you are able to get it, but I am just as certain that it will come to you, and to no one else, as I am that our people are dying with none to help. Will you do it, Kasko? Will you give your *life* —if it has to come to that—to get that power? Will you do it?"

"I will do it," the boy answers, with white, set lips.

"Good! This very night the feast begins in the house of Chief Kush-kwa. Go to the salt water; make yourself ready; drink of it, and empty your stomach with a feather; drink again; purge yourself; cleanse your outer

body also, and take your place in the house of fasting and wait without speech."

"What then, grannie—if it comes?"

"If it comes you will *know* what then, and my words will be as wind. But *he* lived, through many a winter's snows and summer's rains and sun, in the rocks of the mountains among the wild beasts, whose living flesh he tore and ate while it quivered, drinking their warm blood also to make his strength more fierce to battle with all spirits. But it is time you were off, boy; go to the nearest salt water and do as I bid you; then come again by the way of the dead-houses—and speak to no one."

Without a word Kasko rises to his feet and slowly crosses the room to his own particular corner. His little box of boyish treasures is looked over, closed, and set away; his bow is unstrung and hung with his quiver of arrows out of common reach—it is the boy's farewell to himself. Then, taking a clean cotton shirt, he turns and leaves the house. Following the narrow footpath south for a half-mile, he reaches the salt water of the inlet, where he faithfully accomplishes all that grannie has directed him to do.

It is growing dusk as he re-enters the village by way of the dead-houses. The boy has eaten nothing since the early start from Yhin-da-stachy, and the day has been one of peculiar excitement and strain to him. As he passes through the shadows of these haunts of evil, it is with such nerve sensations as he has never before experienced in all his healthy boyhood; and it is with a mixture of joy and awe that he acknowledges these sensations to himself, feeling alive as never before to mystic influences.

It is thus that he enters the great house into which have gathered not only the medicine-men of this village, but others from Klok-won in this way signify their willing-

ness to increase their reputation, if it should so be that the greater medicine-spirit of old should on such an occasion as this single out one to receive his mighty power. Several other boys also have presented themselves as candidates for the profession, though Kasko is the only one who has made any preparation for the ordeal.

The house is in its weirdest light—just light enough to see the darkness by. The tones of the priests, or medicine-men, are all sepulchral, and as horrid rites and fearful, expectant silences follow each other, Kasko's sensations lose none of their force.

It is not, however, until the night of the ninth day of almost sleepless fasting and invocation, with the forced concentration of every faculty on this one desire, that, in Kasko, the last fibre of resistance is overcome, and with a shriek which seems to proceed from the caverns of an under-world the boy, as he believes, is taken possession of by the mighty spirit. By a power uncontrollable the lithe young body is thrown about the great room, is doubled and twisted and knotted in a thousand contortions, like a fowl deprived of its head. It is thumped against the floor and again flung high enough to touch the beams—backward and forward, into every corner of the house, no one daring to lay a hand on him, but keeping as far as possible out of the way.

No one questions the genuineness of this gift; such demonstrations are not seen with the making of every doctor. The old men have imitated it to the best of their ability, but this is plainly not of their kind. The boys have slipped out and given the word to the villagers, who, awe-struck, now crowd about the door. Among them is grannie, who, seeing the dream of her life realized, rejoices.

At length the body of the boy, with still more violent

action, strikes a beam and falls, writhing and foaming at the mouth, working in convulsions horrible to see; and, at last, yielding to a still rigidity more terrible to the beholder than the paroxysms which have preceded it. But as morning steals into the little valley village the convulsions return with the foaming at mouth. The eyes are wide open, with a glittering expression never before seen in the clear, steady eyes of Kasko. He tears his scant clothing from off him and flings it afar. He jumps to his feet, still with uncontrollable impulse, and springing through the door, dashes down the village street, men and dogs alike fleeing from his path. One poor unfortunate dog, bewildered, takes the path straight before the possessed, whose speed is that of the wind. The dog is overtaken, seized upon, and in an instant his throat is torn open by the teeth of the bloodthirsty demoniac. After satisfying his craving, the young Icht tosses aside the carcass, turns, dashes back through the village as he came; on into the jungle west of the lake he plunges, and from it he ascends to the mountains lying between Chilkoot and the village Klok-won, no one daring to follow.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A DAY'S OUTING.

THE village of Kutwulhtoo has not been all these days without a sensation of its own. No sooner had the news penetrated to the girls' prison, and they became aware that a large number of the household would go to Yhin-da-stachy to mourn the death of Chief Kood-wot, than their long-cherished plan for a taste of life and liberty matured, and they at once set about its fulfilment.

With their fingers and one horn spoon which had been left them, Kalhga and Shawet-honga made rapid inroads on their prison walls, their almost noiseless work going on unnoticed by those who wept and made ready for the journey in the main house.

So it happened that when the canoes had dropped down the stream one after another, naught remained between the girls and freedom save a crust of root-grown turf, the breaking of which they only deferred in order to make their exit under the most favorable circumstances.

So much done, they returned to the room next that of the family, where they crouched down and listened.

The sire was crooning to himself some mournful melody; some one was moving about the apartment, and presently, in his shrill, piping voice, the old man asked:

"Where are you going, Gu-nedt?"

"Where should I be going, sire, when the food is low, and no one to look after it but me?"

"Have we nothing to eat?"

"Yes, plenty to eat—for to-day; but the to-morrows have mouths wide open, and I must find beast or bird, else we live on fish. There's no telling when Kun-ul-koo comes nor what he brings. He goes as the wind goes—and takes much or nothing as it falls."

"Beast or bird!" whined the old man, not noticing the lower-spoken remarks of the slave. "Beast or bird—and eggs. I want eggs, Gu-nedt; and bear's flesh. Ah, it seems long since we tasted of bear. I can smell it on the fire now. Ah, make haste and bring it."

"It's not likely I shall come again to-night, if I go for bear. I will see."

"Did Kun-ul-koo go to the mountains? Will my wife's brother bring chickens? Where *is* my *wife?* She likes not to stay with me. Looking after a young husband, I'll make sure. Have you seen her, Gu-nedt?"

"I saw her sitting on the river bank just after the canoes let go; she and other women, with their children, and they were talking about the chief."

"'About the chief!' Just as I thought. He's a pretty one for women to be talking about—women with husbands of their own, too! Go and tell her to come here. Yealh-neddy, indeed! I'll teach her a little something. Bring her here!"

"Oh, I didn't mean Yealh-neddy," said the slave. "They were talking about the dead chief Kood-wot."

"Talking about the dead chief Kood-wot, were they? Just like women! A dead stranger is more than their living own. But that deceives me not, Gu-nedt. it was the *young* man they were *thinking* about. She'd better be careful. Maybe if she knew I'd kill myself—she will have a chance to do another kind of thinking when she has to give her life and all the blankets her friends can raise to pay for what she's made me do. I'll do it some

day, see if I don't! Just let her push me a little closer to the wall. Bring her in, do you hear, Gu-nedt?"

"Ah, sire, I'm just off, and I'll send her in."

"And don't forget the bear's meat—and the eggs, Gu-nedt!"

The slave was heard to leave the house; and, left to himself, the old man continued to mutter his complaints.

Many minutes passed; evidently the young wife was not made frantic by the slave's message. She had left the old man in physical comfort, and now chose to take a little herself.

As time passed the girls were assured that the slave was well out of the way, and as their day's rations had been given them, they were not likely to be sought and missed from *within* the house. So, returning to their earthworks, they cautiously listened for outer signs of life.

Nothing could be heard save the somewhat distant shouts of children at play—sounds which the girls had but little difficulty in locating.

Circumstances so favorable made further delay unnecessary, and in a few moments more the girls stood among the rankly growing ferns and alder bushes, which completely hid the place of their egress.

For some time they were so blinded by the light of day that they were obliged to sit quietly down in the thick green shade and cover their eyes. But, impatient as they were to be entirely free of the village, they soon wove for themselves head-dresses of ferns and grass, which answered the double purpose of shading their eyes from the unaccustomed glare and entirely concealing their features.

"Go you first, Shawet-honga, and get to the playing children from the river way; by and by I will come as from the wood."

"Ah! and if we meet any on the way we will keep our heads covered just as they are, and dance along as if dressed for that."

"That's a thought good to keep. Now, do go!"

Very softly, without rising to her feet, Shawet-honga crept back from the house through the bushes. On reaching the outer edge of the thicket she stood up and took a survey. The path was clear; in the distance she could see, though not very distinctly, the moving shapes of children at play. Bravely, but with a little choking sensation, she took to the open, at first with slow steps and a careless air, which gradually gave place to a spirited run.

"Here comes Son-da-ooh," cried the first girl who noticed her approach. Then to the new-comer: "I thought your mother said you couldn't come?"

"Well, don't make so much noise about it if you want me to stay," quickly responded Shawet-honga, glad to take advantage of the other's mistake. "Come, let us have a feast and make new dresses like mine. I know where's some good long thorns growing over there, and pack-loads of ferns and things to fix up in."

"Good! good!" came from one and all.

"Let the Ravens give the feast and we Kog-won-tons will do the dancing," cried Shawet-honga from under her mask; "when we are dressed no one will know her own sister! Come, boys and girls, see who will get first to the rocks over there. *I'll* make the dresses."

And away went the Kog-won-tons, running and jumping, the girls with spread arms flying, the boys on all fours as different animals.

To sustain the honor of their tribe the Ravens scoured the country around for supplies. In low, dense shades the yan-a-ate was still found tender and crisp, though somewhat bitter. On sunny exposures the berries were

ripening—great quantities of the low, red bunch-berry, and salmon-berries both yellow and red, large and luscious; wild parsnips and native rice helped to make up no mean bill of fare for this mimic feast.

In the mean time Kalhga, also without discovery, joined the Kog-won-tons, who were rapidly getting into their ferns and feathers. Her arrival was deftly covered by Shawet-honga; so that although there had been inward questionings as to the voice which was not like Sonda-ooh's voice, no one suspected any connection between the two girls, or guessed who they really were.

At length the feast was ready. A lovely moss-grown grotto had been chosen as the place of festivity. On three sides the rocks arose, inclosing it; a little cascade fell musically and flowed away softly among the mosses; airy-fairy ferns jutted out here and there from crevices in the wall, and, far above, fir and hemlock spread their branches, as if to cover this house of beauty. On the unprotected side a natural sloping avenue made entrance easy.

At the farther end of this natural room gathered the Ravens with their hospitable supplies, and soon was given the signal announcing the approach of the Kog-won-tons. They came in single file, with costumes grotesque and fanciful. As they neared the entrance a peculiarly lively tune was struck up by the leader of the procession, and joined in by all the dancers, as one by one they sprang into the inclosure and took the prominent place in the performance, then passed on to a more subdued part, which was kept up as a sort of accompaniment to those who followed.

When the dance was finished off came the masks in unceremonious haste, revealing the runaway girls to their unsuspecting playfellows. An unspoken fear fell upon

the younger children, but the girls themselves were for the time utterly reckless, and their wild spirits were infectious. The whole party soon became more gay than before.

The refreshments were brought out and served on broad, shining leaves of the skunk cabbage; and by dint of pinning up with thorns, similar leaves were made to do duty for cups, and were filled at the cascade.

Shawet-honga and Kalhga were fully realizing their hope of a good time—when suddenly, as such things always come, there fell, though harmlessly, among the feasters an arrow, tipped in a boy's fantastic fashion with brilliantly colored tassels of porcupine quills and wool.

Instantly every eye was raised in the direction whence it had come, but the lacework of foliage against the clear blue of the sky, with the momentary passage of a bird beyond, was all that the keenest eye could detect.

Presently a handful of fir-cones came showering down, and then, after a little, a snowy fall of ptarmigan feathers; and, almost before they had reached the ground, the song to which the children had danced was heard again just outside the entrance of their grotto.

Startled as deer, they looked out to see—a more wonderfully gotten-up guest than had before appeared, dancing into their midst. It was a boy about sixteen years old, dressed in a leather hunting-suit. Drawn tightly over the left shoulder and around the body was a scarlet blanket; from his belt hung a number of the beautiful ptarmigan, somewhat mutilated by the loss of breast feathers and the wings which appeared in the boy's head-dress; from each shoulder, spread as wings, were his snow-shoes, and as he danced these were made to flutter as a bird's in flight.

"Kun-ul-koo! Kun-ul-koo! It is Kun-ul-koo!" was heard on every side in tones of pleasant surprise from the children; but consternation had fallen on the runaway girls—consternation which was matched only by that which seized their young relative as he recognized them a moment later.

Short as this interval had been, it was long enough for their quick wits to give them a position between Kun-ul-koo and the opening in the wall. Not waiting to hear more than his muttered "Hl'goss!" (evil omen), their feet took wings, and down the path they flew toward the village, which a few hours before they had left so quietly. All their care now was to reach the covert they had left.

Closely pursued by Kun-ul-koo, who had stopped only to free himself of his snow-shoe wings, the girls were filled with terror as they found him gaining on them; yet the very fleeing itself, the free action of the race gave them a certain exultation of spirit—an ecstasy of life which is not experienced by many in the whole course of an earthly existence.

Impelled by this dual force, and with Kun-ul-koo just at their heels, they dared not turn into their bush-hidden refuge; their strength was failing also, and as the house was reached they barely saved themselves from his hand by dodging into the open doorway.

The door was quickly closed upon them, and a call was sent down the village street which soon brought help enough to capture the poor, tired children. Men and women came thronging in, with sticks and straps and angry words, to punish those who had so wickedly challenged the powers of evil to assail their village. It was a matter of common concern that each and all do their utmost to avert catastrophe, and to attend to the vile offenders was the first thing in order; and from corner to

corner the poor little culprits were driven by the lash and cudgel.

In the mean time examination had revealed the way of their escape from prison; and strong hands had soon entirely demolished the outer earth room, closed the little door between it and the plank-lined room, and banked up against it the heavy clods which remained of the broken outer wall, making the one inner closet altogether secure. Into this they thrust Kalhga alone and made fast the door.

Taking up from the floor a small trap-door, another cave was opened; it was about three feet square, and into this hole Shawet-honga was let down without much tenderness. A strong slat door was fastened over the opening, and over it was thrown a squirrel-skin robe, to exclude light and air still more effectually.

Ten days have elapsed since the departure from Klokwon of Shans-ga-gate's party for the mourning at Yhin-da-stachy, when their return is announced, and a large proportion of the village folk turn out to see them and to hear all that can be told of the doings at the lower village.

The tongues of Shans-ga-gate and his wife have greatly loosened since leaving Yhin-da-stachy, and soon both are volubly entertaining the friends who have filled their house, while in other houses and on the village street other audiences are similarly held by other members of the party.

Their daughters are not the least interested of those who listen to the talk of Shans-ga-gate and Sha-ga-uk. The younger ones hang closely about their parents, and whether listening or not, they offer no interruption by word or deed. Two older daughters—married—sit by nursing their little ones; and back, with modest and re-

tiring manner, is Kahs-teen, a girl of fifteen who has but lately been released from her two-years' confinement; attracting no attention herself, she is giving the closest heed to the story of Kotch-kul-ah's disappearance from Yhin-da-stachy.

A feeling nearly akin to sympathy begins to warm her heart as she realizes something of the girl's position; and again and again arises the question as to her own case: "What will they do with me?"

The answer is nearer than she imagines, for all the villagers have not yet left the house before Sha-ga-uk turns to her daughter with:

"It's quite time that *you* were having a husband, Kahs-teen. Where shall one be found for you?"

A quick blush overspreads the girl's pale fa ıd the eyes are dropped painfully down; she answers not a word. With a little laugh the mother proceeds:

"While we were at Yhin-da-stachy, Yah-doos-kah spoke for her son, Kun-ul-koo. He is a good son, she said, and they have fifty blankets for him, besides a sea-otter skin, to give for you—for he wants you, and his mother and her husband are pleased. Have you nothing to say? It's not every girl that is asked that question."

A bright uplifting of the eyes and their instant dropping again is the girl's only reply.

"I told Yah-doos-kah that they might come here to talk about it after they get home; that will not be many days from now, and if you have anything to say against it you had better say it now."

Both grave and gay expressions have played over the girl's face as her mother spoke, but still there is no word from her lips.

"What do you say, daughter? Is your heart for Kun-ul-koo, or—shall we take an old man for you?"

"If the hearts of my mother and my father take the boy, he is mine," comes the shy but decided answer.

"We will hear his friends speak, then. I want you to learn much more of woman's work, Kahs-teen. Your fingers are small and nimble; there are no better baskets in the country than yours; and your dyeing is good; you take patterns without worry, and *make* others as good as your grandmother's.

"*This* year you must do more. When the hunters begin to come in next moon with sheep from the mountains you must comb the wool as you did when you were a little girl, and then make it into rolls and twist the yarn; *make* the dyes and color it, not for your husband's stockings only, but for a dancing-blanket. And you shall put one in a loom the same day that I do. We can use the same pattern, and will see whose shall be the finest."

Bright with interest, the girl's eyes are lifted now full to her mother's face.

"You have one in the frame now, my mother. See! it is not more than half-done!" And as she speaks Kahs-teen turns and raises a large sheet, resembling oiled silk, sewed in strips, made of the dressed intestines of the bear. The seams are ornamented with little tufts of bright-colored wool.

Protecting the work from smoke and dust, this sheet hangs from the top of the carved upright frame, over which the warp of the blanket is stretched; and at the side of this loom, in a bag of the same material as the sheet, are the ivory shuttles, with quantities of yellow, black, blue, and white yarns.

Close at hand is the pattern, cut and painted on a perfectly hewn plank, the exact representation of a Chilkat dancing-blanket, actual size.

"It will be finished before your yarn is ready. And

now let us see what you have cooking there all this time; the smell of it makes my teeth sharp."

"Oh, it's ptarmigan," answers the younger of the married daughters, with a sly smile at her sister. "They lost their wings, poor birds, and fell at Kahs-teen's feet."

Burning blushes again cover the girl's face, but with ready art she has dropped her abundant hair over it, and through the glossy mass her long, slender fingers are running in her usual manner of combing it.

During the forenoon of the third day after the return of Shans-ga-gate and his wife, a canoe turns in to Klokwon from the south; and, as usual in such an event, many eyes are directed toward it from its very first appearance until it runs to shore.

Long before it grinds the sand in landing, the village is well informed as to its occupants and the object of their visit.

Kahs-teen has been sitting quietly outside her father's house door, with her little boxes of moistened grasses, each of a different dye, within convenient reach at work on a fine basket—her fingers flying in and out with a rapidity bewildering to the uninitiated.

She has been among the first to recognize Kun-ul-koo and his relatives, and stopping only to gather her materials together, she hastens into the house, taking a position well back at one side of the room.

"There is a sound of coming strangers, Kahs-teen. What canoe has come? Did you not see?" soon questions her father, looking up from the withes he is putting into shape for next year's snow-shoes.

"Neh! do you not hear me, girl? *Who* has but just now come to the village?"

"Some friends of yours, father," answered the girl, set-

tling back a little farther into the shadow; then adding, "From Kutwulhtoo."

"From Kutwulhtoo, are they? Then put up your weaving, wife; there is matter enough to attend to without that." And as he speaks he is laying up his own work into its place of seasoning, turning only in time to receive the salutations of Yah-doos-kah for her family and the friends forming their council. Kun-ul-koo enters in the rear of the party and takes an obscure seat.

The strangers are given the place of honor on the farther side of the fireplace. Sha-ga-uk takes a seat beside her husband in front of Kahs-teen, and soon one and another of their tribal and family friends have gathered in to take part in the negotiations and to act as witnesses to the important contract about to be made.

Kahs-teen herself has pushed aside her basket-work, and gathering a blanket about her, half-buries herself from sight. Only a short time before the arrival of the strangers the little girls of the house had come in with baskets of salmon-berries, gathered while the dew was on them; and now, in truly hospitable fashion, the fruit is brought out and placed before the guests. The constraint felt by both parties is most effectually broken up by this little attention and the pleasure of eating.

The preliminaries having been settled satisfactorily by the mothers, it is now the fathers who speak; and when the empty baskets have been set aside, Nalh-say, the father of Kun-ul-koo, proceeds without further ceremony:

"Sha-ga-uk and Shans-ga-gate, your hearts have told you the cause of our coming to your place to-day. We thank you for turning your faces toward us. We have a son who is to us as our hands are—as our feet are—as our eyes are; he is a good son; you have seen him. He is tall, he is straight, he is fleet of foot, his arrow is sure,

and his game-bag is always full. He is slow of speech, as becomes a youth, but his heart is strong and his wits are good. All this is true, and yet he is but three parts of a four-limbed man. He must have a wife. He has set his thoughts on the daughter of your house; his thoughts please his family; we are come to talk of these things. Will you hear us?"

"You shall be heard, friends," is the dignified answer of Shans-ga-gate.

"Hear, then, what is offered as the sign of your daughter's worth. Kun-ul-koo will bring to you a sea-otter, best loved by the traders, and, besides, five tens of blankets. Let us hear your heart speak."

Shans-ga-gate and his wife, with their friends, could not have been self-approved in accepting even a more generous offer at once or without parley; so, after a little talk among themselves over the virtues and accomplishments of Kahs-teen, her father speaks:

"You give us honor, O friends, in asking from us a wife for your illustrious son. We believe him all you say. You know him well, but our daughter you do not know. She is very dear to us; she is both flower and fruit. No man has spoken to her. According to her class, she has been hid from the light for two years. She is white as cotton ever brought from the south. She is not lazy; the work of her hands goes far beyond her father's house. She will soon know all that her wise mother, Sha-ga-uk, can teach her—to tan the leather for the broidered moccasins she works, to make the dancing-blanket from the sheep's wool; also to cure the fish, make the oil, preserve the berries, and everything that a high-class woman must teach her slaves. You know not half her worth, friends!"

"It is true," now speaks Yah-doos-kah. "Kahs-teen is

very dear, but our son's love is strong; he shall give more. We have *copper*, found long, long ago, washed up from some white man's loss—most precious of all our possessions. Kun-ul-koo shall bring enough to ornament your knife."

After the formality of a word with Kahs-teen, her mother makes answer:

"We are willing to take your son for our daughter's husband. He shall live with us first as a son of the house for six moons, and at the end of that time you shall come again. They shall see each other and know the sound of each other's voice; he shall know us better, and we shall see how he fits in our house. After six months, if all eyes see as now, bring what you have promised, and Kun-ul-koo shall call Kahs-teen his wife."

To this all agree; and after but little further talk the Kutwulhtoo people take their departure. Kun-ul-koo accompanies them only to their canoe, as from to-day he is as much a member of Shans-ga-gate's family as Kin-da-shon himself, and with precisely the same privileges and duties as a son.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE TRIP TO FORT SIMPSON—INTO THE LIGHT.

TEN days after leaving Yhin-da-stachy, the party of Chilkats *en route* to Fort Simpson have reached Stickeen or Fort Wrangel, some two hundred and fifty miles south of the Chilkat peninsula; and having been shown the customary Kling-get hospitality, are comfortably sheltered in a large house built as a memorial to deceased relatives, and kept as a place of entertainment for strangers—or, more accurately speaking, a place where strangers stopping over at the settlement may freely entertain themselves.

They are rather impatiently awaiting the final preparations of some Tsimpseans who have bargained for passage to their home at Fort Simpson.

Yealh-neddy, ever restless, has, after the first few hours of looking about, found the delay very irksome, and had not Kah-sha's dignity of class and position been equal to his own, he would have caused the party to move on, regardless of any obligations to the Tsimpseans. As it is, Kah-sha has been firm in holding to their agreement with the men of the south.

Very glad indeed was the sad-hearted man to hear the request of the strangers—it might be that they could tell something of what he most hoped to get by this journey. Why not?

"I am going out to tell them that we can't wait over this tide," says Yealh-neddy. "If they are ready, very

good! If they must wait to wash their blankets, they can wait till we come next year."

With this the young chief leaves the house in the direction of the trading store, moving with long, quick strides. As he makes the turn from the native village into the white portion of the town the store lies in full view, and there, standing before its door, are the men he is seeking.

With them, engaged in earnest conversation, is a white man whom Yealh-neddy has never before seen. A number of Stickeens are standing about, and of them he asks:

"Who is this white man? Does he want to buy skins?"

"No; he is one of the 'up above chief's' men. He doesn't want your skins."

"What is he talking about? What is he doing here?"

"What is he doing here in this village, do you mean?"

"Yes; what is he doing in your village? Where did he come from?"

"He came from the white man's country, of course; the steamboat brought him last time. He wants to go to Fort Simpson; that's what he's talking about now."

"He wants to go with the Tsimpseans—with *us*—in our canoe? What for?"

"Oh! he wants to see their God's-man."

"What did he want here in your place?"

"To see our God's-man."

"Yours?" in a tone more insulting than many rough words.

"Yes, *ours*—high chief Chilkat! You are slow of hearing, if this is the first you know of it. We have a school, too, and are getting the white men's tongue. The Stickeens are a long step ahead of the Chilkats—for all you carry so many eagles in your hearts."

"No more eagles than we've talons for, let me tell you," growls Yealh-neddy, with a threatening gesture, when

he is opportunely interrupted by one of the Tsimpseans, who asks:

"Could you take one more to Fort Simpson, think you, chief? White man pays silver."

"Let the white chief talk with me," is the haughty answer; which being interpreted by the south man, who speaks a little English, the white man turns in a friendly way to Yealh-neddy, holding out his hand with a pleasant smile.

"This is the young chief from Chilkat, you say? I am glad to speak with him."

"But he much hurry now, he say," rejoins the Tsimpsean, in his broken English. "Tide big now—he want quick go."

"I'm glad for that," the white man says. "If he will take me with him, I am all ready to jump aboard."

"It's good you see Kah-sha, brother chief, he say."

"Where is the other chief?"

"In house; he wait—canoe most run away."

"Tell him to take me with him to the other man—*now*," urges the white man; and, not many minutes after, Kah-sha, for the first time in his life, is brought face to face with one ordained to preach the glad tidings of great joy.

The arrangements are soon completed, and on the outgoing tide is launched the large canoe with its burden of costly furs, the white man with his blankets in the midst of the twelve Chilkats and six Tsimpseans.

One of the latter has now taken Kah-sha's place in steering, being more familiar with the passage. Very reluctantly Kah-sha has taken a place this time without his paddle. He has suffered more since leaving Yhin-da-stachy than he has been willing to show, and the addition to their crew has been very timely, relieving him of all obligation at the paddle.

TOTEM POLES, HYDAH VILLAGE.

Seated where he can help to manage the sails, he is facing the missionary. Much and earnestly, though furtively, he studies the man, and longing to discover if he has that which can meet his own great need or satisfy the hunger of his soul. Feeling that he has no time to lose, he is yet more anxious to make progress with certainty. It is the concern of his life; and, with the exception of his little talk with Tashekah, it has never been spoken of to any one; he cannot speak until he sees better the ground he is stepping on.

The day has worn on without a favoring breeze. The dip, dip, dip of the paddles has grown as monotonous as the hum of insects on a sultry summer day. Both the white man and Kah-sha fall under the soothing spell and lie asleep against their packs.

It is late in the afternoon when the rounding of a cape brings them into a fair wind, and until their course is again changed two sails are filled, and the paddlers lie back at ease.

The noise with which the change is made has awakened the sleepers, and that just in time to see the ruins of the old Stickeen village.

Its totem poles and huge corner-posts of ancient dwellings arise before the travellers as a forest fire-robbed of life and beauty. There are but few among the crew who look upon the scene untouched.

Rank vegetation has sprung up, doing its utmost to soften the rigid lines of death, and native bloom endeavors to beautify its desolation.

Here and there protrudes an end of fallen totems, and among the rioting vines and drooping ferns lie the overthrown bones and ashes of those who once kept bright the hearth-fires of this deserted village.

Upon the top of some of the corner-posts are still rest-

ing the great house-beams—some of them three feet through and forty to sixty feet long.

"Do you see where the ravens sit croaking on the house bones over there?" asks Kah-sha, putting out his thin hand toward the ruins of a large building. "My mother's father was at the feast and helped to plant those great posts on the bodies of slaves, let down first into the pits which they had dug, for the strength of the house. Two thousand blankets were given at that time, and the poison water was made as free as the rivers—till blood and horror of every kind seemed like to destroy the whole people."

Very pale is the face of Kah-sha as he speaks, and his voice is full of sadness. The missionary is becoming deeply interested in him, and longs, as do the Christian Tsimpseans, to be able to speak freely in the language of the Chilkats, that they may tell of what the Gospel can do for men. Little do they guess the longing of this one poor heart to find the light!

The Tsimpseans know almost nothing of the Kling-get tongue, and none of the Chilkats save Yealh-neddy knows anything of the Chinook jargon used among the traders with all the lower-coast tribes, and by the natives themselves among these southern tribes, as a means of communicating with the people of other tongues.

The conservative Chilkats, however, have never yielded their more dignified Kling-get, and so it happens that Yealh-neddy, little as he has picked up of the Chinook during his trading trips, has become an important link in the chain of communication with this mixed party.

The white stranger is entirely unfamiliar with any of the native languages, and equally so with the Chinook. He can speak only to the Tsimpsean, who knows a very little English. When what he understands of the missionary's words is put into Chinook, Yealh-neddy can turn

what little he has been able to gather into Kling-get for the benefit of his friends.

The avenue soon proves too obstructed for the missionary to impart that of which his heart is full.

Soon after passing the old village another point is made, and their canoe is then becalmed; idly flap the sails until hauled down, and the men with a good will again take to the paddles. As they do so the Chilkats break out into one of their boat-songs, giving zest and punctuation to their work. It is the song of the ancient origin of their tribes, of their wars with other tribes and among their own clans; of how one triumphed and then another. As it is finished a good-natured laugh runs through their part of the crew.

The mountains have closed in upon them now; the evening is growing cool, and the purple light hangs low as the canoe glides through the shadows of the great hills. One by one the stars come twinkling into the skies—the sky above and the sky below; the song of the night-bird comes clear and sweet from the woody shores; all nature seems at peace. The dip of the paddles is not discordant; it comes as the liquid accompaniment, on which is soon borne the sweet voices of the Tsimpseans in one of their chapel-learned hymns. Sweet indeed—doubly sweet to one who knows the theme:

"There's a land that is fairer than day—
And by faith I may see it afar,
For the Father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling-place there.
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

"To our bountiful Father above
We will offer our tribute of praise,
For the glorious gift of His love
And the blessings that hallow our days.

In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore."

And then follows:

"Jesus, and shall it ever be
A mortal man ashamed of thee?
Ashamed of Jesus! Sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star.
He sheds the beams of light divine
On this benighted soul of mine."

And again:

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin—
The light of the world is Jesus—"

and so on, through many lines familiar and dear to the whole Christian world.

Although their words convey no meaning to the minds of the Chilkats, as these hymns follow each other in natural flowing melody, sung as they are with the spirit, they bear in upon the mind of Kah-sha a quiet and rest and hope such as he has never felt before. And at the same time his longing increases to *know* about the Spirit he feels sure they are singing of.

At length the desired camping-place is reached and the canoe is run ashore. After a supper of dried salmon and tea, and for the missionary his sea-biscuit in addition, the Christians bow their heads in thanksgiving and a prayer for protection to the Father above. Silently and attentively Kah-sha looks on, wondering; and long after the others are sleeping soundly under the pines, he lies thinking.

More and more it seems to him that his time to learn cannot be long. He has been suffering more from shortness of breath, and he grows continually weaker. At times the pain has been very bad, and to-night for a while a strange, sinking sensation had come over him. Can it

be, he thinks, that after all he may not find the light—that he may not live to get to Fort Simpson? or, having gotten there, shall he live to carry the word to Tashekah and Kasko? He must speak to this white chief—even by Yealh-neddy. He will ask if a teacher won't come to Chilkat and bring help to his people.

But his desire is not met in all the way to Fort Simpson. At three o'clock in the morning all hands are busy in getting off again, not waiting for any breakfast—dried salmon and hard-tack can be eaten just as well in the boat, and one meal a day suffices for the natives.

During the morning they come to the mouth of a shallow mountain stream, where the fish are running. Anchoring their canoe with a large stone, the men wade up the stream, and with clubs secure in a few minutes several salmon apiece, weighing about twenty-five pounds each. Just as they are taken the fish are thrown into the boat and the journey is resumed.

In the afternoon a good beach is found, with fresh water and plenty of drift-wood. The canoe is again anchored in shallow water, and after wading ashore with their fish, the men soon have a blazing fire in the shelter of a great rock. The fish are cleaned and hung on sticks to roast.

After a hearty dinner all indulge in the luxury of an hour's sleep before getting under way again.

It is long past midnight when they find another suitable place to land. By this time the rain is pouring down. Unable to make a fire, the men seek the shelter of gnarled trees and rocks; but of such uncomfortable rest an hour or two prove enough, and they take to their canoe, gaining warmth from exercise.

For several days and nights the storm continues. The wind has been against them almost the entire way. At

times the men have continued at their paddles for twenty-three consecutive hours, with but an hour's rest; until at last they find themselves dropping to sleep with the paddle in their grasp.

They have touched at the native village of Hydah, where the people have sought the missionary, asking for teachers, and at Tongaas Narrows.

Some hours after leaving the latter place Cape Fox is passed, and the little bark then launches boldly out to cross a strong arm of the sea, once in the power of which it were as hard to go back as to go forward.

It is a long, weary night. The darkness and fog are heavy; the waves are rolling high; at its fiercest they meet the storm. Standing in his place in the prow, the Tsimpsean captain *feels* the course and directs the paddles. Every strong man is at his place, their paddles moving by a single inspiration—the measure of their leader's solemn song.

Each huge wave is mounted with two strokes—then instantly, with a click, the blade of each paddle lies motionless against the side of the canoe, awaiting the captain's count for the next swell, the frail boat quivering from end to end.

After the long, hard night the native village of Tongaas is sighted by its forest of totems—rising to heights of sixty and seventy feet and seen long before any house appears in the approach to the village. From top to bottom they are carved with images representing the histories and traditions of their families; and in attitudes of peace or war may be seen the wolf, eagle, bear, petrel, whale, the frog, and many other birds and beasts.

The whole crew is exhausted; and on reaching a cove more nearly in their course than Tongaas they run ashore, to find a little rest and refreshment. All efforts to build

a fire are fruitless—everything is water-soaked, and the driving rain extinguishes each long-coaxed flame.

With a piece of dried salmon the weary men take to their wet blankets and lie down on the beach to sleep.

After two hours, the storm still continuing, travel is resumed—this time with the determination of reaching Fort Simpson if possible.

Getting out of cover of the island, they find a favoring wind, before which both sails are set, their corners dipping into the sea as they cut through the high-running waves. The masts bend and creak, but the sailors laugh. "Beat steamboat—beat steamboat!" the Tsimpseans cry.

About the middle of the afternoon the joyful shout of "Fort Simpson!" comes from those who know it best, and in a very short time all have found warmth and welcome within its sheltering homes. Dry clothing and cooked food are among the comforts that all are prepared to appreciate.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers," has been one of the well-learned lessons among these Christian Tsimpseans, and the weary, weather-beaten Chilkats are not forgotten by their fellow-travellers, who have now entered the secure haven of their own households.

Yealh-neddy, Kah-sha, and Kin-da-shon have been taken to the comfortable house of Samuel, the man through whom the speaking has been done on the way from Fort Wrangel.

Their white companion has found as warm a welcome with their missionary, while the other Chilkats have met equal kindness in other families.

After their physical comforts have received attention, Samuel calls about him his wife and children, and, in the presence of their guests, takes down from a high shelf his

little family Bible. Seating himself near the lighted candle and opening the book, he looks up into the face of Kah-sha, saying: "Friend, it is the word of our God. We read it that he may speak to us, and then we speak to him."

Yealh-neddy is called to give these words as best he can with his poor Chinook, and in reply Kah-sha answers in Kling-get:

"I thank you much if you will give me even a little of his word—my soul is more in need than my body has been this day; my heart is more cold, more hungry, more sick, more blind than my body can ever be. O friend, if you have medicine for sick souls, give me some before I die! I have seen you talking to your great Spirit—you have found one who makes you not afraid. I want to find him. I have all darkness; I want light. I hear you say one word many times, in gladness and in fear—'*Jesus*'—what is that? Is it *light?* Is it *love?* Above all the boiling sea of men and devils, does it mean light and peace and help for crying souls? Tell me what you know!"

Leaning, with outstretched arm, toward the simple-minded man who has found Jesus precious to his soul, Kah-sha is trembling in his eagerness and weakness.

Little as Samuel is able to gather of meaning from the words themselves, it is yet enough to give point to the excited, pleading manner of the man whose wan face speaks of speedy change.

"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," Samuel answers him, taking the trembling hand in his own. "Jesus is the Son of God—and God so loved the world that he gave his only Son to save it."

"And *can* he save it?" Kah-sha asks, his understanding quickened by soul-hunger. "Can he save me? Can he give light for darkness and peace for war? Can he beat

down the spirits of evil and make *clean*, through and through, the souls of men?"

"Help me, Yealh-neddy—I know not his speech; but help me to say this: 'The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.' This light of the world is Jesus, and he will shine into *his* soul. Try to tell him what I say," Samuel pleads, at the same time putting up a petition for the help of the Spirit, while Yealh-neddy gives a meagre morsel of this word of life.

"Oh, tell me, friend, where is this Jesus? Let me see him. I will go to-night; death is not far from me. I cannot wait. Let me start to-night. Is he in this town? Will he show me this light to-night?"

Feeling his speech too feeble to trust in this case of urgent need, Samuel lays up his book, saying:

"Wait. I must bring his messenger," and out into the night he turns again to seek his teacher in heavenly things.

"This very day John has come again from his river trip. He speaks Kling-get well; we will take him and see this man who wants Jesus," joyfully responds the missionary when Samuel has told his errand; and leaving his weary brother-minister to find rest, he and the interpreter are soon among the little group gathered about Samuel's kitchen fire.

"You want to know our God, Kah-sha?" the teacher says. "He has known you a very long time. This book is his letter to us, written long, long before your grandfather was born, and in it he speaks of your people and *to you*. Shall I read you what he says?"

Kah-sha's eager face assents; he will not delay the reading by so much as a word.

Opening his own well-marked pocket Bible, the missionary turns readily and reads:

"'Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears—let all the nations be gathered together and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this or show us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them say it is truth.

"'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord; and my servant whom I have chosen that ye may know and believe me and understand that I am he: before me there is no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour. . . . Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners . . . to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. . . . God is light and in him is no darkness at all. . . . If we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. . . . For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. . . . For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.'"

As one long perishing with thirst in a trackless desert might lie at last by a living stream and drink, laving blistered feet and hot, parched hands, saying, "Let me lie and die in this sweet place," so is Kah-sha as, speechlessly, almost breathlessly, he drinks in the words of life.

Passing at length from the language of Scripture, the missionary in simplest words, suited to the minds of those who hear, and meeting their unspoken questions, tells the

old, old story of the creation and the fall—of God's wonderful love for a lost world and his plan for its redemption—of the mission of Christ our Saviour and the work of the Holy Spirit for all who will so much as lift up their eyes to him who was lifted up for us all.

Then in earnest prayer he leads Kah-sha to speak to the Father and seek a child's portion in his kingdom. With implicit trust in this new-found Saviour, Kah-sha kneels, and with tears of joy and the calm of utter peace he comes to God with such words as a little child might say, giving himself and his all into the care of the Great Love which careth for us.

Several hours have passed before the missionary goes to his own house, and Samuel and Kah-sha lie down for the night. Yealh-neddy had fallen asleep very soon after the talk began. Kin-da-shon had followed the conversation with growing interest, but at last was overcome with the fatigue of the long, hard journey, and taking his well-dried blanket from the line where it had been hung, lay down in a corner and slept heavily. But in his heart a little seed had been planted which was destined to live and bear fruit.

Next day Yealh-neddy speaks to Kah-sha: "They say that Fort Simpson never was good for anything till teachers came; now I want a teacher for Chilkat. Why can't we have stores and plenty of silver, just as they have here, and better than the Stickeens? I'm going to ask that stranger who came with us if he can't send a teacher to us. I'd like to know their tongue myself. If I had it no trader would ever get the best of me. I'll make you sure of that."

"I'll go with you, Yealh-neddy. I've wanted to speak to the man myself about that very thing. I'm glad you want it, too. Our country will be better for all that

teachers can bring us—if they bring Jesus, too," and together the men set out to visit the missionary.

Though it is but a short distance, Kah-sha's strength almost fails him before he reaches the house. After being admitted, Yealh-neddy is the spokesman, and very earnestly he makes his request of the minister who had been of their party.

"My people will leave their old ways if a teacher comes. They will be Christians just as the Fort Simpson people are if a minister comes. Will you send one right away?"

"That I cannot promise," answers the missionary; "but I will gladly carry your request and message to my Christian friends in the East, and ask that a teacher be sent you as soon as possible."

"I, too, have a strong word to say, friend chief," speaks Kah-sha, now somewhat recovered from his shortness of breath. "The Chilkat people are in thick darkness; they die with their eyes shut. Some souls are crying for the light. O man of God! they cannot find the way out unless you come and tell them. Tell God's people that the Chilkats are *dying*—that their children are born blind and cannot find the way."

"I will tell them," is the promise given in answer to Kah-sha's appeal; "a teacher must be sent."

Eager to hear more of the true way, he remains for further talk with the missionary. Yealh-neddy repairs to the trading store and begins his day's dickering about the disposal of his furs, keeping a sharp lookout too in regard to the transactions of the other men of the party—nothing backward in exercising his newly acquired rights as chief, in dictating the terms of sale, none daring to sell under the amount which he proposes.

It is several days, however, before the business of the

party is finished and they are ready for the return trip. Into the canoe are stowed then, in exchange for the furs they had brought, shawls, silk handkerchiefs, white cotton, cotton prints, blankets, several suits of men's clothing, guns, ammunition, shoes, a little cheap jewelry, sugar, molasses, tea, hard-tack, and tobacco, with some little extra purchases not always reported, among which is a pack of cards by Yealh-neddy, whose passion for gambling has led him to the discovery of some of the white man's methods.

Kin-da-shon, faithful to his promise to Kasko and to his love for Tashekah, has been ever at the side of Kah-sha in his times of need, and the affection between the two has warmed and strengthened.

Kah-sha has imparted to the boy much of the truth he has himself received from the missionary, and although not fully comprehending it, Kin-da-shon has imbibed enough to give him comfort in many things and a true hunger for further knowledge.

It is their first night out with faces toward the north that Kin-da-shon, in a low voice, asks Kah-sha at their camping-place to come aside with him while the others sleep.

Putting his blanket about the shoulders of the elder man, Kin-da-shon leads the way to a sheltered place, a cleft in the rock where they may sit and speak together without fear of being overheard.

Though cool with the first hint of frost the night is a perfect one, and one never to be forgotten by Kin-da-shon. He is feverish, restless, full of forebodings, anxious to open his heart to Kah-sha, yet unable to begin.

All unconscious of the boy's state of mind, his own heart filled with new joy and the hope of eternal life, yet recognizing the daily increasing probability of his not

reaching Chilkat in the body, Kah-sha eagerly seizes the opportunity of giving such messages as he longs to have reach his children, and reach them through this beloved youth.

"My son," he begins, and from the very fulness of his heart the words are unready.

His beginning, however, short as it is, followed by his silence, gives to Kin-da-shon just the impetus he has required.

"'My son,' you say? O sire, that is the strong wish of my heart—to be your son. Your little Tashekah, since I was a little boy, I have loved with the heart of a man. May I be her husband? May I hold her, and love her, and take care of her all my life?"

"Your words are gladness to my heart, Kin-da-shon. There is none to whom I could give my little one with such joy as to you. It was of Tashekah that I wanted most to speak when I began, and now it is not so hard to say. The child has some thoughts that are more than the thoughts of a child, but whether she thinks of you I cannot tell you, Kin-da-shon—only this tell *her*, that if her heart can hold you, her father will be more glad than for great riches. You are as dear to me as a child of my own, and it comforts me to think of Tashekah with you—when I am gone. It can't be very long. The good God has made me very happy. He has kept my breath till I could hear his words and know his way of life. O my son, if you should forget all else, if you lose everything else, hold fast the words you have heard and share them with my other children. Tashekah is hungry for them now, and she will need them whether she has you or not; and Kasko will need them. I pray the Good Spirit to send a teacher to our country, and when he goes be sure to learn of him and follow the way he shows you. An-

other thing: I want you all to learn to *read* God's word for yourselves; and, Kin-da-shon, tell my children that my way is very light and my heart is full of peace and joy."

Kah-sha sinks back exhausted by his excitement and unusual length of speech. Kneeling beside him, Kin-da-shon chafes the bloodless hands and speaks tender words.

It is long before Kah-sha revives sufficiently to be helped to a more comfortable resting-place, and for the remainder of the journey to Wrangel he attempts no further talk—indeed, for the most of the way he lies in his blankets, too weak to sit up, and at their camping-places is carried to and from the canoe by the stronger men.

The fear that he may not live to reach home is becoming general, and no one desires to make unnecessary delay at Fort Wrangel. Reaching that village in the evening, they simply rest for a few hours, and in the early morning are off with a good wind at their backs. Seventy miles are made before they stop again.

It is near the close of September, and fresh snows have already touched the mountains; and except just in the middle of such days as the sun shines the air is keen and biting.

The favoring south wind which drives them nearer home, filled as it is with steam from the tropic kettle, strikes these walls of glacial ice and snow and deluges the country with rain.

On the third day out from Wrangel the travellers enter Lynn Channel—the long, straight highway to the Chilkat country. Hopes are now felt that Kah-sha may live to reach home. After entering the channel, however, the rain becomes sleet, and their blankets being wet the wind pierces to the marrow of all.

The men take to their paddles in self-preservation and

endeavor to keep the wind from Kah-sha by extra clothing. It is a vain effort; the cold has already entered his blood. Kin-da-shon lays down his paddle and, under the blankets, takes in against his own warm breast the poor, icy feet, while he rubs and holds the hands of his father-friend.

Convinced at last that no such means will overcome the settled chill, the boy begs to have the canoe run ashore, that they may make a fire and warm him with hot stones and tea.

"No, no," is Yealh-neddy's reply; "he would only get cold the sooner again. Having such a wind we must go on, or his breath will not last till we get there."

"It will not last through this day, if I know aught of the signs of death," insists the youth.

"You should have never had your hair cut, Kin-da-shon; it rather weakens your words as a chief of spirits. Just at what time by the sun will his shade leave us?" sneers Yealh-neddy.

Seeing that words are worse than useless, Kin-da-shon makes no further effort to change the course of the party, but devotes himself to his dying friend.

Kah-sha, as he recognizes his condition and feels the near approach of death, fixes his eyes on the face of the boy in mute appeal, and the stiffening lips quiver with an attempt to speak; no sound is heard save a slight gurgling in the throat, though Kin-da-shon has bent his ear to catch the faintest utterance. As their eyes meet again, those of Kah-sha are lifted upward, and then, full of meaning, they fall again upon his faithful friend.

"Yes, you are going; there is no night there," he whispers low to Kah-sha; "and I will come—and Tashekah—and Kasko. Jesus Christ came to save because God so loved the world."

An expression of unutterable peace shines in the eyes of the man, making answer to Kin-da-shon's words; and as they are raised again toward the sky they become fixed, as with great joy.

Silent with wonder and with awe, Kin-da-shon looks on until the light has faded out, leaving the sightless balls still uncovered and on the face of the dead a look of perfect gladness. Never has the boy seen such a death before, never such a face among the dead.

For a moment he feels nothing of grief for the wonder of it all; and then, like a black wave, his own loss and the thought of Tashekah's grief and Kasko's efforts for his father's recovery—all these come over him with sudden and irresistible force; and burying his head against the lifeless heap before him, he sobs aloud.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GAMBLING—A HEAVY STAKE.

YEALH-NEDDY did not invest in his pack of cards simply as a curio; he had applied himself during many a leisure hour while at Fort Simpson to learning the art of using them.

Several others of the party who were expert gamblers in native games were also interested in this new one, and so far mastered it as to be able to hold their own against Yealh-neddy so well at least as to render the game intensely interesting during their homeward journey.

Indeed, every waking hour not necessarily employed in eating, in the management of the canoe, or in keeping themselves from numbness, was devoted to this absorbing business—for business it certainly became, the stakes being continually increased until they involved the entire possessions of Yealh-neddy and his chief antagonist.

The excitement is running high; the last game is coming to a close, when the sailsman calls that Yhin-da-stachy is sighted.

No attention is paid to the announcement; the game goes on, and is finished only as the canoe has grounded on the sand and the villagers gather about to welcome the travellers and to hear the news.

With loud curses Yealh-neddy acknowledges himself beaten, and that to all his possessions he has forfeited his right; that he has absolutely nothing to call his own, unless, indeed, his old wife and his witch slave might be called his.

He is desperate; he will not stop here. Never has he had such luck; it must be the vile white man's cards; without doubt he would have been the winner had they used the native sticks.

"I challenge you," he cries, in a rage, to his victorious opponent—"I challenge you to one last play, with our own gaming-sticks. You have left me nothing. I will put up against all that you have taken from me and all that you possess—I put against it—*myself!* I will make you a beggar or I will be your slave!"

"It is done, my chief Yealh-neddy; it is the last time you shall hear that title—you are my slave!"

"The ravens take your tongue! Let us to the grass and decide that matter."

No time is thrown away on salutations to friends, in speaking of the death of Kah-sha, or assisting in the removal of the body to one of the houses from the canoe. Nor do the gamblers go to any remote place of quiet. The gambling-sticks are made of the wild apple-wood, and number from seventy to a hundred in a set. Each stick bears a name and is easily recognized by the initiated. Yealh-neddy's set, in a leathern case, is slung across his shoulder as he springs from the boat. Only a few steps from the place of their landing, in the high, rush-like grass which borders the beach, the players tramp down a ring and divide between them the beautifully polished sticks.

In positions facing each other the men lie at full length, with elbows resting on the ground, while under the loose trodden grass before them their "hands" are kept concealed, two or three paces being left between the players.

Knowing the temper of Yealh-neddy, his antagonist has insisted on their each choosing three witnesses, and

these men are seated, three on each side, between the opponents, thus forming a circle.

Meanwhile the news of Kah-sha's death has flashed through the village and brought to the beach every man, woman, and child who has been able to move. The sound of mourning is already heard.

Grannie had so timed her visit as to be in Yhin-da-stachy when the traders were expected to return. Greatly pleased at the settlement of Tashekah as Ka-kee's wife, she had, as the chief representative of her family, made every arrangement as to terms, and awaited only the formal acquiescence of Kah-sha.

Already through all the villages it has been received as a fact that Tashekah has been given as wife to Ka-kee, and she herself has settled down to an acceptance of her fate, though not without inward struggles and a half-understood pain of heart.

She had thought—but no; what *had* she thought? It was her father—*he* had thought that Kin-da-shon—had he changed his mind? She had been sorry to hear her father speak of giving her to any one; and yet—Kin-da-shon was good and gentle, and she had liked to think that he and Kasko would always take care of her. Having seen more of her now, did Kin-da-shon think he couldn't love her any more? Was that the reason her father had given her to Ka-kee? Oh, if he could only have known how the sight of the man caused her body to shake and her heart to stand still!

Had he been afraid that he would not live to come back—and did he do this to give her a home? Had he found that Kin-da-shon gave her no thought, and so had he tried to save her shame by this arrangement?

Well, she would try to bear it; there must have been some good reason, or her father would never have done it.

Still, hard-dying hope sometimes whispered that the father's coming might change it all yet. She would let him know her heart—that since she had seen Kin-da-shon so much with Kasko she did not fear him, and since Kasko has gone she will be very lonely. No one can half so well take his place as his dearest friend. Dear Kasko! no one can take his place or be just like him; and yet Kin-da-shon is more tall—and, yes, *more* gentle; and if he wanted her, as her father thought he did, she would not be unhappy.

So Tashekah had thought, after learning from Ka-kee's wife what they expected of her. So she had thought until after grannie's coming, when things seemed to be so settled that there was little room to hope for any change.

She could not open her heart to grannie, and if she could it were little comfort she would get. Grannie believed in making hearts fit the circumstances. And then, if Kin-da-shon had not cared for her, after all? No, she could do nothing but wait and see if her father could at all help her.

And now that waiting is over—the blow has fallen—Tashekah is fatherless. She had been sitting within doors, trying to amuse the slowly recovering Ch-one, when the word reached the house. She hears it as one in a dream; she slowly lays down the pebbles from her lap, where the little thin hands of the sick boy has dropped them one by one, rises to her feet, and, without exclamation of any kind, walks deliberately out of the house and down toward the canoe. The excitement, the cries of the people, the gambling party which she passes, are all alike unheeded. She sees only the canoe and the men who are removing from it their packs. Eagerly she scans every man, every pack; then the bed of the boat itself.

The men are coming down again from the houses; the

packs have all been carried in now except one of unusual size and shape down in the middle part of the canoe.

She approaches the side of the boat and lays a hand on its edge. They are raising this strange burden now. With care it is passed over into other waiting hands.

Moved mechanically by some unthinking sense, she comes to its side and walks with its bearers. They reach a vacant house; the door stands open and through it the little company passes. At the farther side of the room they lay it down—this something. Not a word is spoken, but there is louder crying at the door as the people follow in. She touches the blankets; she kneels beside them and draws away the folded coverings. There are those who would restrain her, but Ka-kee is at her side.

"Let her alone," is his stern command.

She has found now the still, cold face, and gazes upon it without a sign of emotion. She herself is unconscious of any grief, of any feeling; it is as though her own heart had ceased to beat—had turned to stone.

But, unconsciously, her mind is receiving the image of her father's face, so that by and by, when kindly Nature has passed it through her "dark-room" developers, that tender face, with all its new expression of peace and joy, will stand out clear and true, comforting its possessor.

Kin-da-shon, longing to help her, is yet prevented from making any sign. Already it has come to his ears that Tashekah is the wife, by her grandmother's giving, of Ka-kee; and over her the medicine-man is already showing more of the master's authority than before the return of the traders with the body of her father.

"He gave me a message for you, Tashekah," begins Kin-da-shon, with great effort. "You might like to hear it with only your one pair of ears."

Slowly and steadily her eyes are lifted to the face of

the speaker in a half-vacant stare. There is no effort to withdraw them, no attempt at speech; but gradually there steals through her frame a slight tremor—a hint of life.

"Hold your tongue, boy," angrily cries Ka-kee. "Hold your tongue and let the girl alone, or you may wish you had."

At the sound of his voice the girl shudders and buries her face against the lifeless form of her father. Seizing her by the arms, Ka-kee brings her to her feet and bids her go to his house.

For the first time she turns on him, with a glare not unlike his own; and shaking off his loosened grasp, she starts toward the door. When half-way across the room she begins to sway, to stagger as one drunken.

Too angry to follow her, Ka-kee stands in his place, while, springing past him, Kin-da-shon prevents her striking the floor in her fall.

Seeing that consciousness has gone, without a word he gathers her into his arms, and through the astonished crowd bears her swiftly to the house of Ka-kee.

"Make a place for her, Sa-allie," he says to the mother with her child; "her spirit is asleep."

Tenderly he lays her down, longing to hold her ever, and with a heart sick and hungering he turns to go.

"You are sick, Kin-da-shon. Wait and let me give you food," kindly speaks Sa-allie, struck with the boy's haggard face.

"I could not eat. You are good to me, but my heart takes all my stomach's room; there is no place for food."

"Rest, then. Here is a blanket."

"I could find no rest in a blanket, friend. I must go to my father's place." A sneer from the medicine-man answered him.

"That is best. It is a good time to turn your face

toward your mother. But what is that message, now, that you had from Kah-sha? You need not hope to hide it from the medicine-spirit. Out with it!"

Ka-kee had entered in time to hear the latter part of Kin-da-shon's reply to Sa-allie.

"I have no love for hiding things, Ka-kee," the boy answers, with gentle dignity. "It is as well that *you* should tell her, when she wakes. Her father found the medicine he searched for; his spirit found a great light before it left the body. 'Tell Tashekah,' he said, 'that I have found the God who so loved the world that he gave the dearest thing he had—his only son—to save it. When there was no eye to cry or heart to be sorry, he put his arm around men to love them and to take the bad and the soul-sickness out of them.' And Kah-sha thought his spirit was going to live with that God—and he wants Tashekah to come."

With a face almost as death-like as Kah-sha's own, Kin-da-shon leaves the house. Approaching his pack, he makes an effort to rise with it. Finding this impossible, he opens it, and taking out the little trinkets which he had brought for Tashekah and his mother and sisters, he puts them into his "gualh," or neck-bag; and then, after engaging that his pack be sent by canoe to Klok-won, he takes his new musket in hand and starts out for his father's village, on foot and alone, unable to remain longer in this sad place.

Kin-da-shon has not yet reached the end of the village when his steps are arrested by a series of excited yells. Turning to look back, he sees a great crowd gathering about the gamblers, though people seem to be coming as well as going.

True to the native instinct, he retraces his steps to learn the cause of this new commotion. As he approaches

the crowd he finds himself side by side with Kah-da-guah, the old wife of Yealh-neddy, who is speaking excitedly and gesticulating wildly.

"*Lost*, has he? Well, it's the first time, without doubt," she has been saying.

"Yes, *lost*—Yealh-neddy has—this time for sure," one of the villagers rejoins, while another puts in:

"The fine 'King-George's-country' shawl you bade him get you is gone, and your dress and silk handkerchief——"

"And the tobacco and molasses and everything he traded for," clamors another.

"That's nothing! It's all he had at home before he started, as well; and, what's more, he's gone *himself* now. You have a *slave* for a husband, Kah-da-guah!"

"What's that you say, fox?" Kah-da-guah asks with venom.

"I'm saying what I know, that's all. Yealh-neddy will get a little of his bite taken out, I'm thinking, when he has to bring wood for another man's fire."

By this time the woman has pushed through the crowd and stands before her husband.

"So you are lost, are you, Yealh-neddy?" she asks, with just a touch of triumph in her tone. He turns away in sullen contempt.

"You had rather go with your goods than have them go without you, maybe?" Still no answer.

"Why didn't you stake your wife, too? It's a pity to break the family."

More angry than he dares to show, Yealh-neddy maintains his dogged silence.

Turning then to the winner of the game, she continues:

"What is a slave chief worth? Neh! what will you sell

him for?" A wicked light gleams in Yealh-neddy's eye, but, undisturbed, his master answers Kah-da-guah:

"Would you like to own him yourself, woman?"

"Maybe I would; maybe he is not worth your price. Let me hear."

"I own a hundred blankets, and what I got from him was worth as much more. He put his own value against that, and I am willing to pass him on at the same price."

"Two hundred blankets! It were a dirty thing to say a chief is not worth that, but it's a good deal for a slave. What do you say, Yealh-neddy? Two hundred blankets is a good deal to give, but I've got enough to pay it. What do you say?"

"Say what you like," growls Yealh-neddy; "but don't be at it all winter."

"Good! There are not many words to say. You meant to make me or my tribe pay for Kotch-kul-ah's loss. Where she is I know nothing more about than you do yourself. If I pay this for *you*, you shall promise first in the ears of this people that you will never bring this matter up against us."

A contemptuous grunt and a shrugging of the shoulders is Yealh-neddy's only answer.

"Don't be all winter about saying what *you* have to say to this, Yealh-neddy; my berries are calling for their oil, and I must go and fix them," speaks Kah-da-guah, rising to the occasion and feeling quite equal to the matter in hand.

"You must think Yealh-neddy a fool if you suppose he would give *himself* for *that* white-faced woman. Bring your blankets out and let this buzzard go."

"Yes: but my haste is not too great to wait for your promise before these people; it *may* take all winter for that, and I must fix my berries first."

"You woman fool! What would you hear? Your daughter is a faded bearskin; she's worth nothing to me. I shall never trouble myself to ask you or your tribe for so much as a rabbit-skin—it would be a cheat. Do you want to hear more? If you were to find the vile baggage and give me five hundred blankets to take her back I should spit in your faces," blazes Yealh-neddy in his wrath.

"Men of our two tribes, you are witnesses to his words. Witness now that I take both promises, and that his master gets from my stores the two hundred blankets that make Yealh-neddy free."

So saying, Kah-da-guah, without further parley, calls to a serving-man to assist her in getting out the required number of blankets.

Having witnessed this transaction also, Kin-da-shon turns and, retracing his way through the village, resumes his journey.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### USHA-SHAWET, KOTCH-KUL-AH, AND KIN-DA-SHON.

IN escaping from Yhin-da-stachy Kotch-kul-ah was guided by the experience and natural sagacity of her companion. For many years Usha had been accustomed to moving about the country as a trusted slave, getting in supplies of berries and such herbs and barks as were constantly in requisition for medicinal purposes, for tanning and for coloring the grasses also and the bark-lining needed for basket-making. Knowing the country so well, and being versed in the art of *living* under such conditions as attended independent out-door life, she was well able to direct their course to a place of hiding which would be both secure and comfortable, at least for a time.

Crossing the wide channel at once, they followed the shore north for some distance, until, striking a small sand-bank, which even the high tides did not always cover and which now lay quite exposed, they disembarked.

Making a small pack for Kotch-kul-ah, including only her own blanket and the paddles, with a small bundle of dried fish, Usha gathered what remained of their baggage into a large and compact bundle and hid it in the heavy undergrowth on the shore.

Then taking up the canoe, overturned on her head and shoulders, herself scarcely visible as she moved along, she led the way over the hard, smooth sand. After a long tramp they came to a softly flowing mountain stream which had no visible outlet—its waters sinking into the gravelly

shore and disappearing altogether far above the bed of the river.

Hiding the canoe in the bushes and finding a comfortable retreat for themselves, they rested and ate their fish. After such refreshment Usha went back for her pack, and with it safely returned to Kotch-kul-ah and led the way up along the course of the stream, till, about half-way to the mountain's top, they came to a lovely little lake, where the spotted trout were leaping in the sunlight like truant beams of stronger growth.

Here, on the lake's sweetly wooded shore, these homeless women found rest and peace and strength as full as the natural world can give it.

To this spot Usha brought the canoe, and during their summer's tarrying much improved it by sewing up its cracks with twine of bark, lining and stuffing them with fine moss and melted gum. They repaired the booth of hemlock boughs which Usha had made and used long before, and within they made them fresh beds of the same fragrant material.

For Kotch-kul-ah it was precisely the sort of life needed for the counteracting of such pestilential poisons as her two-years' confinement had engendered. When, after three months, Usha brought her out again to seek a winter dwelling-place among the sheltering rocks of the eastern shore, it would have been hard to recognize the high class of the girl by her complexion. All the angles of face and figure had disappeared; charming curves of girlish beauty had taken their place. The contracted chest and stooping shoulders were transformed; the step was elastic and free as a deer's; the eyes were full and bright and the complexion dark and ruddy.

Through the summer both women had found plenty of employment in taking fish and drying them; in entrapping

fowl and even sheep, which furnished them with both food and bedding; berries were gathered, boiled, mashed, and pressed into cakes, looking like darkly cured tobacco, then dried in an earth-oven.*

Neither did Usha forget her healing herbs; so that when they were ready to go, the stowing of such generous supplies became a serious matter, though finally arranged with satisfaction.

Already, further up the mountain, light snows had fallen warningly before Usha said: "We must go."

Having gotten their goods to the beach, the women waited and watched the river until daylight began to fade; then, being assured that no boat had ascended the channel during the afternoon, they cautiously began their own voyage, this time with very different feelings from those with which they had left Yhin-da-stachy.

And yet, as Kotch-kul-ah found herself once more in the world, as it were, thoughts came, and old-time feelings revived, and longings grew, until she was almost ready to risk a return to her own people.

"We must have great care," Usha had said in starting. "The berry-picking is all done, but hunters may be going out, and it is near the time when the Fort Simpson traders ought to be back, and some of them will be going to the upper villages. We must not cross their path."

These words and the getting out into familiar scenes again had been the gentle stirrings which roused anew her regard for Kin-da-shon.

"Yes," she thought, "it is time they were coming. If

* An earth-oven is a large hole, say three or four feet square and almost as deep, dug in the ground and lined with flat stones. Fire is then made in it and kept burning until the walls are thoroughly heated, when layers of large leaves are placed within it and on these are placed the little rush racks or frames on which the berry cakes have been shaped; over these more leaves, and above all fresh earth is heaped that the heat may be retained. After being cured in this way the berries are ready to be eaten, either as they are or stewed. By this process fruit is easily preserved as a winter supply.

we should cross their path—what then?" And with this question played her dreams, waking or sleeping.

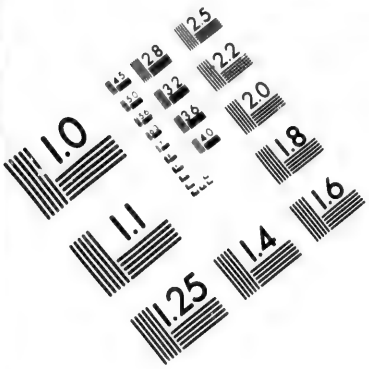
Their destination was that night reached, however, without discovery by a human being. Half the distance to Kutwulhtoo was made before they ventured to cross the river shallows to the island which hemmed in the swiftly flowing narrows.

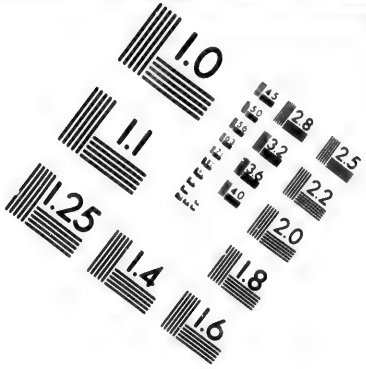
The night was far spent, but the moon was old and late, and by its waning light they found a small break in the island wall, through which they passed. Down the stream several yards the canoe was current-borne before it was possible to touch the opposite shore. When they did reach it, Usha, with a small coil of rope in hand, an end of which had been made fast to the boat, sprang nimbly to the bank and drew the rope about the trunk of a tree. In this way it was secured until Kotch-kul-ah and the cargo were landed.

Here Usha's experience again served. No time was spent in searching for a dwelling-place. Usha knew the very spot—had known it these many years, without so much as hinting its existence to any living soul—a place she had discovered in one of her long rambles, and she believed herself alone in the discovery.

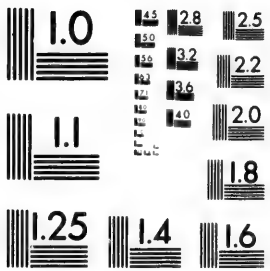
Only a few rods from the river course, along which runs the trail from Yhin-da-stachy to the upper villages, the mountains stand in a high, barren wall; here and there abundant wood-growth and tangled vines hide these fortresses from the trail, and it was in a well-concealed and unusual break in their rocky face, its approach entirely covered from the passer-by, that Usha soon placed their worldly wealth and began to make the place habitable.

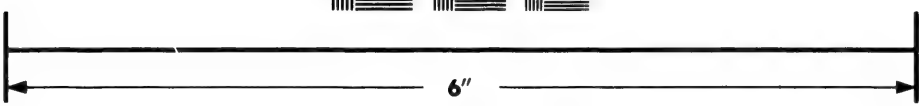
Her suspicions that it might be the winter retreat of a bear were now upon examination confirmed; and while the fact strengthened her opinion of it as a place of com-

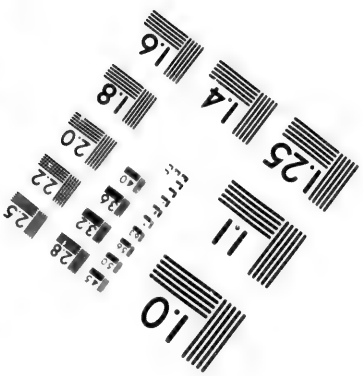


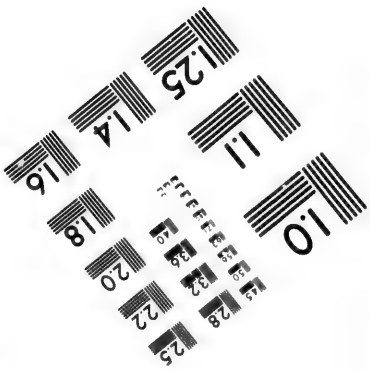




# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)

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fort, it gave her a little uneasiness as to their present safety, since signs of winter were growing sharp. She could make a trap which would settle the question of proprietorship if the bear should fall into it before falling on them. At any rate, they could do no better than take possession, and to-morrow she would get the trap ready.

After so many hours of hard work such anxiety had no effect in preventing sleep. Both Usha and Kotch-kul-ah slept heavily for many hours. It was near sunset of their first day in the cave when Kotch-kul-ah awoke from a dream of rustling leaves, and under a strong impression that some one was near them.

Creeping out of the cave and through its winding rocky entrance, she very cautiously approached an opening through rocks and undergrowth, whence she peered out.

Some moments passed before she was able to discover the cause of the sound, if sound she had heard; but, waiting with eyes fixed on a point where the trail was visible, there presently appeared, as from the river, a shaggy cinnamon bear. Filled with fear, she was about to rouse Usha, when, with a snorting growl, the great creature raised himself to his hind feet and advanced along the path until the bushes hid him from sight.

Glancing along in the effort to obtain a lower view of the trail, Kotch-kul-ah was struck with horror at sight of a single traveller, with face toward the north, and as yet entirely unconscious of the bear's approach. A moment later she recognized Kin-da-shon, who at the same instant started back in surprise and drew his knife at his suddenly discovered enemy.

The bear stood before him, face to face. The new Fort Simpson musket was of no value in such an encounter, though loaded ready for use. No right-minded Kling-get ever stooped to take such advantage of a bear.

Kin-da-shon had quickly dropped his gun to the ground and grasped his ready knife for a hand-to-hand battle—a very unequal contest at a man's best, but in Kin-da-shon's exhausted condition defeat and a horrible death were almost certain.

Kotch-kul-ah, not knowing what to do and hardly conscious of doing anything, yet did the best thing which under the circumstances could have been done—she shrieked and screamed with all her new lung power.

Usha, startled out of her sleep, was a moment or two in comprehending the situation; then her voice in its shrillest tones was added to Kotch-kul-ah's, and at the same time down among the bushes near the trail she flung such sticks and stones as were at hand.

The coward bear, afraid of what he could not see, dropped to all fours and rapidly disappeared along the lower trail, though Kin-da-shon had fallen under him and lay as one dead—silent and blanched were the lips and not a tremor stirred even the eyelids.

Unmindful of their own insecurity, the women run down and kneel beside him.

"He is dead! he is dead! and all my heart dies with him!" Kotch-kul-ah cries, burying her face against the unconscious object of her love. To Usha it is a revelation; she is not slow to understand, and to her it seems almost wiser to let him die. Kotch-kul-ah's unrestrained grief and cries of despair appeal too strongly to her woman's heart, however, and, regardless of consequences, she reassures the girl.

"He is not dead, Kotch-kul-ah. His heart is tired; his stomach is empty. But see! his face is untorn and his head is unhurt, and the blood is flowing only from his left shoulder."

Examining further, she discovers a dislocation of the

right shoulder, caused by the disarming stroke of the huge paw. Off at a little distance they find the knife, wet with blood to its hilt. Evidently it had been raised for a second stab when the bear struck down his arm, at the same time driving his fierce claws into the other shoulder when the outcry of the women frightened him away, thus preventing the further mutilation and death of the defenceless victim.

"He is not dead, Kotch-kul-ah; but you must help me or he will be. Let us carry him to the cave, where I can tend his hurts."

Roused to action by such hope, Kotch-kul-ah's strength is equal to Usha's; and rolling him into his own blanket, they thus bear him up and into their hiding-place.

Usha's skill is quite sufficient to determine the extent of the boy's injuries and, with Kotch-kul-ah's assistance, to replace the disjointed shoulder. This is done before any effort is made to restore consciousness, though Kotch-kul-ah pleads anxiously.

"The pulling won't hurt him now, while he knows nothing and the threads are all loose. They will be tight and hard when he wakes," the woman answers, as she proceeds according to her own judgment.

This first task finished, she gives Kotch-kul-ah water with which to bathe his face, while she busies herself with making dried-mutton broth, having heated the stones by burning oil on them—since the smoke of a wood fire might betray them to any one passing on the trail below. The broth for the weak stomach, and some cooling, cleansing decoction of herbs with bruised leaves for the hurts and open wounds.

It is after nightfall—at least in the cave there is but the light of night; without, in the open, it is not yet quite

dark—that Usha's efforts are rewarded by the waking of Kin-da-shon's self.

After having done all, Usha retires to one side of the cave, and, wrapped in her blanket, allows no unnecessary anxiety to interfere with her natural rest. Deep-breathed sleep has her now in full possession.

Not so Kotch-kul-ah—nothing could lure her from the side of Kin-da-shon. Half-reclining, she leans over him and with one hand brushes back from the high, smooth forehead the soft, dark hair, while the other she holds lightly and anxiously over the slow-beating heart, watching its faintest variation. A change has come—come so gently and so gradually that the watcher is not yet certain of the quickened action, when the face turns slightly toward her; then, before she recovers from that surprise, the weak voice is heard in slow questioning:

"Mother?"

At the sound of his voice her whole heart rises in an ecstasy of love and joy.

What did he say? She could not have told—he is alive. He is awake; she is with him!

Not a word could she have spoken even had she understood his question. Her heart chokes all common utterance. With impulse uncontrolled she lays her cheek to his, and then to his cool forehead presses her burning lips.

His right arm reaches out toward her; but uncertainly, feebly, and with a moan, he drops it before it has found her hand. She takes it in both her own; she strokes it fondly, tenderly.

He rests; in a very short time she knows that he is sleeping—sleeping as one whom his mother keeps.

Through all the weary night her faithful love—*not* his mother's—keeps its unwearied vigil. His sleep is long and refreshing, and when, in the morning's faint light, he

awakes, Usha is stirring about, getting fresh broth and poultice-leaves ready for her patient.

For a time his gaze follows her, half-vacantly, before thought and sense come again to inquire: "Who? When? Why?"

His lips move unreadily; his tongue sleeps. He need not speak; his eyes can do the questioning; and without turning his head they begin to search the place.

His own gun, the supplies of food, the rocky walls have all passed under his scrutiny before he becomes aware of the presence by his side, before he feels the warm hand holding his own.

As he becomes sensible of its touch a flash of intelligence—of recollection—comes into his face.

"Mother!" comes from his lips; but he does not try to move; it is so good just to *live*—he would like to lie just so forever. It would be hard to move, and she is so seated that he cannot see her face without moving.

He presses ever so softly the hand which holds his own.

There is a warm answering clasp. It is enough; he closes his eyes and would sleep, but a spoon, half-filled with hot broth, is held to his lips, and the gentle hand passes from his to turn his head and lift it a little, that he may drink.

How warm and good it is! It is just *like* mother's broth! And now he wants to sleep.

It is near noon when he again awakes, and it is with new strength. Usha has at last prevailed upon Kotch-kul-ah to take her blankets and get some sleep, though it was long before sleep came to bless the weary and excited girl. Now she does not stir even at the voice of Kin-da-shon, as he at last lifts his head and questions Usha of his whereabouts.

"But my mother—where is she?"

"She has not been here."

"'Not been here'? Surely I did not dream last night when she sat beside me and touched my face?"

From Usha an unsatisfactory, wordless sound is his only answer. She goes on with her work.

"Tell me, Usha; tell me who it was, if my mother was not here. Is any one else here—any woman besides yourself? I know it is so. This morning when I awoke she was beside me still. Who was it? Where is she now?"

"If that you hear, you must first promise to hide in your heart the secret of this place. You must tell no one who helped you or where you were sheltered. You shall let no one know that Usha lives."

"I promise you, Usha. To cause you trouble were mean pay for your kindness. But how can you live here?"

With a broad sweep of her hand over her accumulated stores, she asks:

"Does that look as if I could *not* live?"

"But through the winter—and alone?"

"*You* say I am *not* alone!"

With something of a puzzled air, not unmixed with amusement, Kin-da-shon asks:

"*Are* you alone, Usha? You promised to tell me."

"I would not have promised, even trusting you, if it could be hidden. But to get you away from here we must have her help. There"—pointing to the blanket-covered figure in the darker end of the cave—"there is *Kotch-kul-ah*, and *she saved your life!*" Then, after a full pause, she adds: "She saved your life, and unless *you* can save *hers* she must share my beast-life or *die*."

Startled by the woman's intense manner as much as by her words, Kin-da-shon makes hasty answer:

"Life for life is not too much; surely I will save hers if I may. But *why* must she die? Why must she *hide?*"

"Yealh-neddy is not one to give up a mouse-skin without pay, and when it comes to losing the wife he wanted, nothing short of her life will satisfy him."

For the first time Kin-da-shon now takes in the situation, though at first bewildered. He recalls bit by bit, as of half-remembered dreams, until all the parts of his experience at Yhin-da-stachy and his sad walk cut short by the bear's advent have been pondered over and pieced together, and he is sure of the whole. Then to Usha he turns again and says:

"Kotch-kul-ah is free from Yealh-neddy. I myself and others heard him make a vow that he would never take her for his wife, and that he would hold neither Kotch-kul-ah nor her tribe to answer for his loss." Then he tells the story of Yealh-neddy's gambling difficulties and their sequel, of which he has been a witness.

"But she can never go back to her mother. Yealh-neddy would find ways to make her kill herself. He will never forget; he will make her pay the last hair. I know him well enough to be sure of that."

"Then she need never go back to Yhin-da-stachy. *My* mother and father love Kotch-kul-ah; they will take care of her always. Let her stay with them."

"That is good! She will go to them. Did you hear any word spoken of old Usha-shawet, Kin-da-shon?" the woman asks, giving at last a thought to herself.

"Only that she had disappeared in the night, and that among the dead-houses and through the villages she had been searched for, then given up as a bad spirit."

"Then I am best in my own hiding-place. There is no peace for me among the living. When I have suffered enough to be a spirit I may do them as much harm as

they think I do—if that is what spirits are for. Why is it? I can't think why—when I *like* to gather roots and make the sick folk better."

"In the south-land I have heard strange things, Usha; stranger than tales of witchcraft. Have you heard ever of a spirit that did not work evil—a spirit that *loved* people and wanted always to help them?"

"Never; no spirit like that ever lived in the Chilkat country."

"But there *is* such a spirit, Usha. I don't know him much myself; but there is a white man in Fort Simpson who told us about a Great Spirit who made the world and everything in it, and that he loves the people as much as a father loves his children."

"I don't believe it. If he was strong enough to make all things he would be strong enough to keep them from so much trouble. No, no, Kin-da-shon; don't be foolish. The lying old raven made us on purpose to torment us. That is easy to believe."

"I *told* you that it was stranger than our stories; but that is not the strangest part of it. This Chief of the Above made everything good and glad, the man said; and I suppose it was the raven—'the evil one,' he said—*fooled* the people that lived first and got them to do things he liked; so they got off into the dark among all these witch-spirits, and got dirty and sick and full of trouble, and then blind. And they forgot the way back, and at last didn't know they had a Father that ever loved them at all." As Kin-da-shon spoke, slowly and with an effort recalling the connection here and there, a faint but real glow of faith's assurance, such as had never appeared during his *hearing* of the truth, began to burn in his own heart.

What he had listened to as a new story only has become

a reality in which he, as one of those lost children, has personal interest; and he stopped to ponder it.

"Is that all?"

"No: the rest is yet more strange. The evil one was doing everything to spoil the Good Spirit's things. Whole tribes of the people that he had made to be clean and happy turned from him and worked with the spirits of darkness. They broke his stick, and they got hurt so they couldn't help themselves; and they lost all their blankets, so they couldn't pay for what they had done; and they turned from him more and more, and got so they couldn't help working against him all the time——"

"Well, I guess that's about what the Chilkats are doing," Usha interrupted.

"And their debts to him got so piled up that they took the life of every man and woman and child in the world to pay, and *then* it wasn't paid——"

"And then he threw them down and tramped on them?"

"No, no; that's what a man chief would do, isn't it? But *he* didn't; that's the strangest part; *he cried* for them; he loved them; and he tried to think how he could pay for them and bring them back. His own boy, Jesus Christ, was the Chief to do it, and he did; he paid for us all himself, and he is living yet and loves us. Think of that, Usha! a spirit, and he loves us!"

"How does the white man know?"

"He has a letter from God that tells, and it tells about a happy place where God is. And, Usha, you knew Kahsha. He saw the light of that place before he died; he said it was not far, and he was glad to go."

As Kin-da-shon has proceeded with the message to Usha, his realization of it has deepened, and with the mention of infinite love and its remedy for sin the mois-

ture has gathered in his clear eyes, and something very like a sob half-chokes his speech.

Usha sits as one into whose lap has been poured things of uncertain but possible value, which she means to look over before throwing them away.

Though the voices have failed to arouse Kotch-kul-ah, the silence now has that effect; and starting up with a vague sense of something wrong, she sits facing Kin-da-shon before she realizes the situation. Then the full waves of crimson flush her face and neck, the eyelids drop over the flashing lights, while she is silent and confused by her gladness.

Kin-da-shon, unembarrassed by any tender feeling, looks at the girl with sensations similar to those with which he had watched the night sun from the mountains of the north. The peculiar thrill of a sensitive organization passes through him at this vision of fresh womanly beauty—beauty such as he had never before seen. Now as her blushes rise and her eyelids fall he still gazes on with wondering appreciation; it is also a rosy sunset—this vision before him—more beautiful than in its full glory.

It is Usha who breaks the spell.

"You have slept long, Kotch-kul-ah. Eat; for there is work enough to do before to-morrow."

As she speaks she rises, and setting food before the girl, goes on to say:

"Kin-da-shon must go on to Klok-won to-night. There is good to no one in his stopping longer here—and you must go with him, Kotch-kul-ah."

A quick, questioning look is her only reply. Kotch-kul-ah is *eating* now.

"Kin-da-shon has brought strange news for you: Yealh-neddy has thrown you away, and you are to live where you please."

"And *you*, Usha?"

"I will live where I please, too — *not* in Yhin-da-stachy."

"And not in Klok-won?"

"How long could I live there, do you think? *Witches* work best in the dark. This is my place now. It matters nothing to any one where I am to-morrow."

"Usha!" cries the girl reproachfully, "*I* want always to know where you are. You have been good to me. If ever you had a witch-spirit, it is gone. I know you, and I love you!"

Kneeling at her side, Usha takes the girl's hands, holding them and smoothing them tenderly, while tears all unused to flowing drop down over the wrinkled cheeks and wet the enfolding hands.

"My little one—my precious!" she says over and over again.

"Tell me what to do, Usha—you are wise!"

"You will help to take Kin-da-shon to his father's house—your uncle's house—and there *you* will find a nesting-place; that is best."

"Yes, Kotch-kul-ah, my father will be a father to you, and my mother will love you," Kin-da-shon says, gratefully and earnestly.

A look of joy is her answer; and Usha resumes:

"As soon as daylight begins to die we will take the canoe and get out into the river; we can reach Klok-won before the new day."

"Then *you are* going, too, Usha?" Kotch-kul-ah asks, in pleased surprise.

"To be sure I am going too. How else would *you* go? But you and Kin-da-shon shall have no tongues in Klok-won; and I will be down the rapids and safe in my hole before any one else has eyes."

So the arrangements are made, and afterward are carried out with entire success.

As the little party nears Klok-won in the early purple of the morning, before a house can be discerned they hear the baying of the village dogs—hundreds of them; at which familiar sound, so long unheard, Kotch-kul-ah falls to crying. 'Tis one of the tokens of human life!—sweet life!—ah! and bitter!

When Usha has set the "children" on the shore a half-mile on the nearer side of the village, and watched them for a moment as they start along the trail, it is with feelings of such genuine motherly pleasure for them that, for a time at least, there is no sense of her own desolation; and then, when her poor little boat drops into the hurrying stream, a certain exultation of spirit takes possession of her—an almost defiance of the powers of darkness—a feeling that, in spite of men and demons, Kotch-kul-ah *shall* be happy. There can be no other way now; she knows it full well, and laughs as she cons it. Kin-da-shon must be her husband now. If all else were against it the honor of both tribes is now at stake—coming as they do out of the night together, from—no one knows where.

Yes; no time will be lost in making it known throughout the tribes that they are husband and wife. And yet Kin-da-shon has not thought of such a thing—Usha is sure of that; but Kotch-kul-ah thinks of nothing else than that it is his wish and intention to make her his wife.

But Kin-da-shon is good, Usha knows. He will soon see that he cannot let her honor or his own be dimmed. He will marry her, and he will be none the less happy. And in all this Usha is a true prophet.

The early rousing of Shans-ga-gate's household by the coming of Kin-da-shon and Kotch-kul-ah is the occasion

of a great commotion, which soon extends through the length and breadth of the village; and when their experience, or as much of it as they have agreed upon telling, has been made known, they are welcomed as the lost now found.

Kin-da-shon's story of Yealh-neddy's complete renunciation of Kotch-kul-ah is received with unmixed delight by the friends, who at once begin to name the gifts which shall be made her mother on Kin-da-shon's account.

Kin-da-shon soon awakes to the necessities of the case, which, even had Tashekah been free, would have been almost impossible to flee from. As it is, though his heart cries for his only love and will not be comforted, he knows that his only peace, and Kotch-kul-ah's, is in yielding to this arrangement so pleasing to his friends and so exacted by circumstances.

Thus it comes about that from this very day Kin-da-shon and Kotch-kul-ah, his wife, are among the "old folks" of this household. Kotch-kul-ah full of life, with high and happy spirits; Kin-da-shon quiet—often sad, but always gentle and kind. Before his shoulders have fully recovered their soundness, his mother and father, with other friends, make the trip to Yhin-da-stachy, taking such presents as fully satisfy Kah-de-guah and her family, and give the final seal to the marriage.

Yealh-neddy hears the contract with a grinding of nis teeth and with an inward cursing which bodes no good to the young husband and his wife.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE WEDDING-PARTY.

KUN-UL-KOO'S betrothal trial of six months in the family of his chosen bride is at an end, and with mutual congratulations the friends of the couple meet again in the house of Shans-ga-gate to ratify the marriage agreement.

For many days snow has been falling heavily and continuously, and the Kutwulhtoo people have come up by trail on snow-shoes.

The short journey has been a carnival, filled, as the people always are, with childlike joy and exuberance of spirits at the appearance of early winter snows; the young men with their light and slender snow-shoes have run races with each other the entire distance over the broad white way—all minor obstacles being hid far beneath its surface. Servants have carried the packs of blankets and skins which go to Shans-ga-gate and Sha-ga-uk, the parents of the bride. The groom's father and mother with their friends follow, with merry speech and laughter.

And now, leaving their snow-shoes at the door, that no ill luck may enter the house, the friends gather about the great pile of blazing logs in pleasant sociability. Messengers have been sent with strict etiquette to bid those of the village who are expected to come. The goods have all been looked over and approved by the recipients, who, on the other hand, make quite a display of Kahsteen's handiwork. Here stands her dancing-blanket loom, with its blanket well begun, showing smooth, even work

of fine twisted thread; beside it are large baskets filled with soft white and variously dyed wool "rolls" and yarn. There are skins of the silver fox and sea-otter, as well as others of less valuable kinds, which Kahs-teen has dressed and tanned and made into robes. There are hides of dressed leather, soft as velvet, of a creamy white color and of a golden brown. There are also numerous articles of clothing, fashioned by her busy fingers from other skins similarly prepared—shirt and trousers with combination moccasins, embroidered with beads and gayly colored porcupine quills; there are mittens made of tanned skins, with the fur inside, and fur caps and boots, with blanket stockings.

Very flattering eulogies come from the examiners now seating themselves in social fashion; but at length a silence falls over all, in expectation of the few words which will complete this high-class marriage.

A man of years, with whitening head, who is a relative to neither family, but a friend of each, has been called upon to speak. Without rising, he responds by addressing first the bridegroom, who has taken a more prominent place in the company than on the occasion of his betrothal:

"Kun-ul-koo, son of the Bear, you have been allowed your eyes and your ears, your smell and your taste in this household for six moons—is your heart still the same? Is your desire still for the daughter of Sha-ga-uk?"

In a clear voice, and with a straightforward look, the young man makes answer:

"Ah, ah! my friends! The heart of Kun-ul-koo is made strong!"

Then to the young bride turns the old man: "Kahs-teen, daughter of the Ravens, is your heart filled—do you cry for no other?"

Blushing and shy, she draws back still more behind her mother. Her answer is too low to reach the company.

"She wants him," speaks the mother; at which the old man turns to the parents:

"This new man and woman have not changed their hearts in the sight of each other for six moons. Sha-ga-uk and Shans-ga-gate, are your hearts for this thing? Is this young man what you want for your daughter's husband? Are you and your friends satisfied with his gifts?"

"His gifts are good! He is a good man!" answer the mother and father of Kahs-teen, while Kin-da-shon adds:

"Kun-ul-koo is to my mother as I am, and to my father as his brother."

Then to the parents of Kun-ul-koo the old man speaks:

"Have you anything against this woman?" and they answer:

"She is our choice."

Now there is a loosening of tongues among the assembled company—merry laughter and noisy chatter soon dispel all shadow of ceremony.

Great messes of fat bear-flesh have been set boiling, sending their savory, steamy odors through the place. When this part of the feast is nearly cooked dried fish are set on slender sticks, to grow crisp before the fire, while from their ash-pits under low-burning coals are raked out a number of roasted fowl.

When these last have been deprived of their coat of feathers and the stews have been dished and the fish broken on their trays, the whole company is served. Then the fire is built up anew—logs on logs somewhat as a log house is built—and as the early darkness falls upon the village this home is the scene of hearty good cheer and brightness.

After the protracted and satisfying meal the remnants

of food are cared for by the servants, who retire to the further corners of the room and enjoy their portion, while story-telling and fireside games occupy the company.

"Shans-ga-gate first," the Kutwulhtoo people demand. "Let him tell the story of his tribe, since he has taken another *bear* into his family."

"No, friends, no; let us hear first something of the raven from his friends—that were more fitting to begin with, since they are my guests. Nalh-say," addressing the father of his daughter's husband—"Nalh-say, tell of his tricks, one or two—to quit before you're gray you could not tell them all."

So urged, Nalh-say begins:

"Long time ago—he! he! he! cha-auk! [given with closed eyes, prolonged intonation, and with the extended right hand and index finger describing a half-circle with horizontal base], two Kling-get women—sisters—lived all alone in a little house they had made by the great water, for neither woman had ever taken a husband nor wanted one. They fished and hunted and lived full—only in each woman's heart there was an empty house for children; nothing could live in it but a baby. So, wherever they went or whatever they did, they always thought about a child.

"Yealh—the Raven—knew their hearts. They got plenty of food; he was hungry, and hunting for himself was not what he liked.

"He saw an easy way of getting what he wanted. So one day he made himself look like a baby and lay down on the beach, crying. The women heard the cry and ran to find the child, which each woman wanted for her own; but the one who touched him first claimed him and carried him to the house, where she gave him fish and berries.

"He ate all they had in the house and went to sleep. Then the women went for more.

"Yealh wanted fresh meat, with the blood, and this is the way he got it: he turned a young lynx into a baby, just where it would be found by the woman who had no child.

"When she had found it and brought it to the house, her words swelled till her sister was angry and said:

"'I don't believe it *is* a baby!'

"'Maybe it *isn't* a baby. What *is* it, then?' sneered the new mother.

"'A lynx, likely,' the angry sister answered, shooting her arrow into the bushes and killing game unseen.

"'Then *your* baby must be *Yealh*—to *eat* as he does.'

"But when the babies went, both of them, to sleep, the mothers went again for food. When they had gone, Yealh ate the lynx baby and dug a hole in the sand, where he covered the bones. He went to the water and washed from himself all spots of blood; he picked from his teeth all signs of the flesh he had eaten, then waited in the house for the coming of the women.

"He was still very hungry, and ate all his mother had brought home; but the lynx's mother was crying for her child.

"'Where is my baby? Where is my baby?'

"At last Yealh spoke:

"'Some people came in a canoe while you were gone. They said the baby belonged to them, and they took it away.'

"'Where did they go? What people were they?'

"'They are not of *your* people; they are far from here. You can never find it.'

"All night the woman cried, but in the morning she went again with her sister to get berries.

"Yealh ate all they gave him when they came home; he was growing large and strong, and was always hungry.

"'To-day, while you were gone,' he told the women, 'that same canoe came again, with a man in it. He said your baby was hungry. He said if I would bring food to a rocky place he told me of, the baby would be fed. If you won't send the food your baby will die.'

"'I will go myself,' the woman said.

"'You can't go yourself; you can never know the place. Even if your baby starves, the man will never let you know.'

"So baskets of berries, sea-weed, and venison Yealh carried to the forest, and alone among the rocks he ate them all.

"But what the woman had said in the flash of her anger came back to her heart and married a thought. She had said he was Yealh—she began to believe he was.

"Every day when he came again with empty baskets she was vexed, and the spirit in her grew till she hid it no more.

"As she sat with her sister on the beach one day, waiting for the baskets to be brought again, she spoke out:

"'I told you your child was *Yealh*—and he *is*.'

"Her sister was very angry and poured out words to bite.

"'Well, if you don't believe it let us prove him. We will take plenty of water and make it boil. When he comes we will put him into it. If he is Yealh he will fly away.'

"To this the mother agreed, and when he came back with his hungry baskets everything was ready for him.

"He kicked and struck and struggled, but they were strong, and into the boiling water he went—when lo! away flew Yealh, just as black as ever—and that was the last of the baby and of his eating in that house."

A general laugh greets the conclusion of Nalh-say's story, which, though by no means a new one, has been listened to with fixed attention by young and old.

Back from the fire, which now receives a generous supply of animal oil to increase its light, against the inner wall, sits Kin-da-shon, and close at his side, leaning against his shoulder just a trifle now and then, but still *leaning*, is Kotch-kul-ah, his wife.

Kin-da-shon looks down upon her tenderly, yet not without that shade of sadness which has become habitual.

"Do all women have that empty house in their hearts, Kotch-kul-ah?"

"Maybe," she answers, with a rosy smile.

"Would you have *Yealh* or the *lynx* in *yours?*" he asks again, with a twinkle of mischief.

"Neither: mine shall be Kin-da-shon," is her ready answer, given with a shy touch of her hand upon his. Whereat he takes it into his own and lays them both upon his knee, resting on them his cool, moist forehead. Tender thoughts, rising prayerfully, fill his soul. Though his knowledge of the true God is but as a blade, he carries soil which shall bring forth at least the "thirty-fold."

"Shans-ga-gate—Shans-ga-gate's story!" is now heard on all sides, and without further urging comes the response:

"The story of the Bear tribe is a good one to tell. I am glad I am a Bear." Here all the Bears laugh, and with them laugh the Ravens.

"A long time ago—he! he! he! cha-auk—in the new of the year, the village women went out to gather yan-a-ate. They found only what was spoiled in the growing, and very bitter; so they walked on a very great way into the forest.

"The sun was not far from its setting-place in the north, when they at last found what they went for, growing tender and tall—a whole village of it.

"Each woman gathered for herself a heavy bundle of it, and getting it on their backs they started for their home-place.

"One woman only was left behind; she had a very big bundle and the string broke. While she stopped to save her yan-a-ate the other women got out of sight.

"At last the new-tied bundle was on her back, and because of its weight her body was bent and her eyes were on the ground; but she walked fast in following the women.

"She had walked a long time before she stopped to look and listen. There was neither sight nor sound of her friends; her ears told her only of the night-bird and the rushing of a mountain stream. Her eyes told her of no footprint like her own—the way she was going was not the way she had come. The sun was gone; there was nothing to tell her whither she should go.

"She was frightened. She cried as the sea-gull. There was no answer but that the mountain rocks gave her.

"Changing her course, she went a little way further, when she heard a gruff voice say:

"'You have left your own people; you will never find them.' She looked up and saw a very great bear. She began to cry again and dropped her yan-a-ate. Still she did not run.

"'Never mind them,' the bear said. 'You shall be my wife; you will be very glad; you will cry no more for your people. Come: we are going down to the stream for fish.'

"He picked up some of her yan-a-ate and tasted of it; and she saw then that a great many other bears, men,

women, and children bears, were coming down toward the stream.

"As they came near the first bear said to them:

"'Here is my wife. I have just found her.'

"All the bears looked at her and looked pleased, but just the women bears—they didn't like her. She knew it and was sorry, but she went with her husband, and when all had got plenty of fish they went back into the woods.

"What at first seemed to her thick trees she soon saw were houses—the bears' village.

"Then all the women bears made fires and cooked supper for their husbands. She tried to do the same, but her fire would not burn.

"Next day her husband went off to hunt, and when evening came she tried again to make her fire burn as the other wives did; but, as before, there was nothing but black sticks; and when her husband came he found no supper ready—only a crying wife.

"'Why do you cry?' he asked her.

"'I can't make a fire; and all the women laugh at me,' she said.

"'How did you make your fire?' he asked her again; and she answered him, with a strong voice:

"'My sticks were dry and I made it right.'

"Then her husband laughed as the women had laughed, but not with their bitterness.

"'That is the reason that your fire burns not,' he said. 'You must make it with *wet* sticks; all the women make fire that way.' And when he showed her how to do it she loved him.

"After a long time the woman's brothers came near this bears' village hunting; they were very hungry; their people had no food, and many were dying for something to eat. These seven brothers of the bear's wife had come

from far, finding nothing till they came to the bears' village. They saw the very house where their sister lived; and when they listened they heard the sound of voices, but could not tell what was being said.

"The six big brothers said to their little brother:

"'Go close to that bear's house and shoot an arrow into it!'

"The little brother crept close up to the house, but instead of shooting he listened. He heard his sister's voice —she was speaking to her husband about a little baby which she knew would come soon to her arms. Then the boy looked in and saw the woman.

"She had on a piece of the dress she used to wear, but it was worn out, and on her arms and neck he saw soft, warm bear's fur. He saw her husband very kind to her, though his voice was the heavy voice of a great bear.

"Now, for a year after their sister was lost all her brothers had cried for her and hunted for her; and then had given a feast for her, believing she was dead.

"When the little boy saw his sister in the bear's house he ran back to his six brothers and told them. They were angry, for their stomachs were empty, and their knees knocked together for want of strength. They must have that bear; so they sent the little brother back again, and again he shot no arrow; only listened.

"This time he heard the bear speak; he had seen the men and was telling his wife about them. Then the woman looked out carefully, and when she had seen her brothers she told her husband there was no danger—she was their sister, she said; they would never harm her husband.

"But they *did*. When she went out to tell them, they shot her husband and took her away with them—the meat also.

"For many days and nights her tears wet the ground of their hut. None of her friends could make her heart glad

again. But one day she laughed. It was the day her baby came.

"It was not a baby like her brothers—it was *three* babies—brown as their father—and she was glad!

"Her friends were angry, and her brothers were very hard to the young bears, complaining of the food they ate, and many times planning to make food of them to pay.

"But their mother helped them always till they grew stronger. They grew fast—faster and stronger than her own people ever grew.

"Then came another famine. The people were starving and ready to die. But the bear children, now grown, went every day and brought food enough to the village for all the people. There was no more hunger, no more sickness. Old men and little ones laughed together, and loved the bears.

"Stronger and stronger grew the new people till they were the head of their country, and even the Ravens looked up and praised them. That's the beginning of the Cinnamon Bear tribe."

Although interested, many of the children had curled up in their blankets and gone to sleep before Shans-ga-gate had finished his story. At its conclusion, by general consent, the party broke up with very little ceremony; the Kutwulhtoo people to return to their homes after a few hours of sleep with their toes toward the kindly house-fire of Shans-ga-gate.

The morning hours are more than half gone before the tardy daylight comes to rouse the sleepers. The snow has ceased falling and lies hard frozen on the earth. A little before noon the sun rises lazily, as though merely stretching itself in sleep, only a hand's-breadth over the southern horizon; and after moving but a few degrees in its low course drops suddenly out of sight again.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE GOOSH-TA-KAH—A BELOVED GHOST.

"IT'S true, Shans-ga-gate, if ever the raven lied. I was crouching out of the way watching my trap when I saw him, and at first I thought it must be my chief, the bear himself, waked up, till he turned a little and I saw his face."

Here Kun-ul-koo covers his own face as though to shut out the terrible vision which haunts him, and trembles violently.

"If it was not the bear, what was it? Did you have your trap baited?"

"Ah, ah! I had the best trap I ever made. The young cotton-wood was just right for the bending, and the spring was perfect; my oily noose wanted to slide, and the meat was fresh and sweet."

"What then—what happened?"

"Then—the goosh-ta-kah came! Uh!" And again the young man hides his face at the vivid recollection of his terror.

"Go on. 'Twas a dog, likely enough."

"If a dog—why, then, let me never see another."

"How came he, then? Did he speak?"

"Not a word. His voice, though, was as the voice of bear and lynx—and—maybe *man*—I cannot tell; but more dreadful than any voice I ever heard besides. 'Twas when he saw the meat I heard it. I was lying near the trap as I told you, listening and watching in the bushes, when all at once I heard a noise like the step of a man. My

eyes followed my ears. The night was neither light nor dark, but snow lay on the ground even in the forest, and I saw what seemed to be the body of a bear coming toward the trap.

"As he came nearer I saw that he walked as a bear and his fur was as the fur of a bear; but his eyes were as the eyes of the owl—with the sharpness of the lynx. His nose was the nose of the raven and his mouth was a wolf's mouth, with the long white teeth showing sharp and clean. Then I saw that his step was not the step of a bear, but free, as though the legs were longer, and his arms swung long and loose, and wrapped about the trees or clung to their boughs as he came.

"He stopped and smelled, and came nearer to the trap. The light in his eyes was horrible, and his teeth made a noise that shook my bones.

"He went straight to the trap; he looked at the meat and let out the cry that cut my liver. He picked up the stout green stick I had left ready for my own use, and thrust it into the rope so that it could not slip; then he sat down, just as sits a man. My heart was turned to ice and my body to stone. My eyes were fastened on the creature as the eyes of the dead are fixed. I could no more move—but I saw him all the time.

"He put out his hands and took the meat up. He smelled it strong; he cried out again; he put his white teeth into it and tore off a good half; he ate it with greed as he sat. He put the other part back into the trap and fixed it as it was at first. When all was done he turned him about again and came closer to *me*. His eyes were on me and I felt his breath so cold it burned me. As my heart died, he lifted wings like a monstrous raven and flew off up the mountain."

"Where was it? Where was your trap?"

"Not far from here—toward Kutwulhtoo."

"On the mountain?"

"No; at its foot."

"Then you were near the images of the medicine-men—their sacred offering-place! How dared you go there—taught since ever you came into the world that none but a medicine-man can go near the images and live? Why you *have* lived to tell the story is the only wonder of it. You can look for ill luck and trouble the rest of your life! What took you there, young fool?"

"I was not by the images themselves, and I kept my eyes the other way when I found they were near. The snow was deep, and I wandered a little from the trail as I came from Kutwulhtoo the other day; all around that place I found such numbers of tracks and signs of game—more than I ever saw before. That's the reason I went back and fixed my trap there. It was back from the sacred place, and my eyes I allowed not to turn toward the Ichts' images."

"Poor fool! What's a whole season's game to the evil you have brought to my house? You never heard, I suppose, that the spirits of evil spread those tracks on purpose to draw men to their strong places? You never heard that the finest berries and the fullest bushes are made to grow in the same place for the same reason when the season turns? You never knew that people died from eating them? You never saw old Koo-dake-clah, swelled up like a frog, carrying about all her life the unsightly load of stones in her body—stones that the demons turned her berries into when she had got her fill, one time when she lost her way and found the fruit near the offering-place? These things were not enough for Kun-ul-koo—he must see and taste the devil for himself! Queer he didn't take you—too stupid for his use, I suppose. He'll

sharpen you, no doubt, by the life he'll give you now!" And Shans-ga-gate turns away in disgust and miserable apprehension, leaving his frightened and crestfallen son-in-law to such thoughts as may devour him.

Kin-da-shon has overheard the entire conversation. His sleep had been disturbed by a dream of Kasko—he had seen him, wild and alone, on the mountains. When he awakened it was with the cold sweat standing on his face, and he lay in almost breathless silence, living over again the events of his dream. 'Twas as he lay thus that his sister's husband had rushed into the house, with the terror of his night's experience on him; and Shans-ga-gate, roused by twinges of rheumatic chill, sat up to rub his knees just in time to question the affrighted Kun-ul-koo.

To Kin-da-shon this story has seemed almost the interpretation of his dream. Led by his night's vision, this new story of the goosh-ta-kah suggests a new idea.

In common with others, he has heard of the ghost-man ever since he can remember. Unspeakable terror has many a time caused his heart to stand still. More than once in the dead of night he has awakened, with the sweep of death-cold fingers on his face, and staring, has himself beheld the man of the dead world, and lay breathless and speechless till the daylight came and caused the ghost to flee. But in all his own experience there has been nothing so tangible as this vision of Kun-ul-koo's. "*Took up the meat* and *ate it!*" Kin-da-shon must know more of that! Does Kun-ul-koo *know* that *some* of the meat was *gone*, and the *rest laid back* in *order?* If he has seen that, has he seen the *tracks*—can he tell what they were like? Could it be—— No; hardly, after so long a time. It is more likely that Kasko is dead. This is not the only wonderful story of the goosh-ta-kah being

seen this winter, and last winter the people were greatly excited through similar appearances. Why should the thought of Kasko connect itself with this ghost-story simply because he had happened to dream of him while he slept? But the idea will not be reasoned down—it has come to stay and grow until it can command.

Often and often during the past year of their separation Kin-da-shon's heart has run out through the storm after his brother-friend. For Kasko his heart has cried and has been never wholly quieted. Kasko, hungry and suffering—perhaps dying; and his father dead and gone, unneeding his son's blood-bought aid. Yes, dead and gone into such light and joy as Kasko never dreamed of gaining; knowing, too, of a God who had been strong enough to beat the devil. Oh, Kasko *must* know it! Kin-da-shon himself will go, without speaking to a soul. He will go where Kun-ul-koo went! Yes, if necessary he will go even a little nearer to the images of the Ichts. To-night, after all are asleep in the house, he will steal out and see, perhaps, the goosh-ta-kah!

Kin-da-shon has lain a long time thinking and resolving. It is time to rise now. He will build up the fire and go for his bath. From the ample store of fuel provided yesterday against to-day's need, the fire is soon blazing well. Then taking his axe in hand, Kin-da-shon goes down to the ice-bound river and opens a hole in the ice for his usual morning's plunge.

Taking back to the house his axe, he calls the other men and boys, and with a bundle of light switches in his hand he returns to the river, entirely relieved of superficial covering. Dropping the brush-whip, he throws himself into the ice bath, and out of it lightly springs again. Then, not too hurriedly, he lies down on the snowy bank and rolls over and over. On getting up he switches his

body from head to foot, rear and front, until with the stinging exercise he is in a crimson glow.

Before Kin-da-shon has finished, the male portion of every house in the village has turned out in the same style for the same purpose—even the little fellows of four and five years are tossed into the icy water, thrown into the snow and switched until their first poor tears are melted.

Even within doors ordinary clothing is not at once resumed. An old man may fold a blanket about him, but the heat of the younger men scorns even this, as they sit in unconscious nudity and eat their salmon with a relish.

On the other hand, the *women*, even in the care of the youngest of their own sex—the baby women—guard their persons with the utmost modesty.

Half a dozen brown cupids, with dried fish in their hands, are soon deeply engaged in one of the many games common among the people—games which are all adapted to the cultivation and development of the faculties. *This* is a *memory* game; scores of tiny sticks, split from the firewood and broken into equal lengths, are placed by one boy, while the others hide their eyes, in a row of groups, something like this: II IIII I III IIIII II I III II IIIIII I IIII. When all are arranged, the boys, at a given signal, open their eyes, and while the leader counts perhaps ten they study the arrangement; then, at another signal, their eyes are again closed while each boy in turn gives his count. The boy who first gives accurately the number of groups and the number of sticks in each successive group lays the sticks for the next play.

The little girls of the household soon have a rival attraction in the game of *hah-goo* (Come here). They have divided their number into two parties, stationing them in opposite corners of the room. The chief of the leading

party holds aloft a bright-colored rag on a stick, and waving it back and forth, she calls the name of one of the opposing party. Then all together the leading party give the sing-song invitation, with every laughable grimace and contortion of feature or of body, with pokings of the fingers, and with side remarks calculated to upset the gravity of a judge.

"Hah-goo, Kotzie! Hah-goo, Kotzie! Hah-goo, Kotzie!" they sing, as Kotzie, responding to the call, advances toward the banner, which she is allowed to carry back in triumph for the use of her own party, if she can approach and take it without a change of countenance in the face of all the monkey-shines invented by the banner party.

High runs the fun, and the older folk, lying back smoking, look on and enjoy it too, often throwing in a bit of their own gratis to both parties.

As the day wears on Kin-da-shon finds it hard to restrain his nervous impatience. To employ himself more than to furnish fresh fish for supper, he takes his dark blanket and spear, with fish-eggs inclosed in a netting of sinew thread for bait, and proceeds to the river.

Finding a hole of perhaps a foot and a half in diameter, he lies down by it and into it drops his net of fish-eggs, sinking them to the bottom of the shallow stream. Then sending his spear down to within a few inches of this safe bait, he covers himself and the hole with the blanket, and awaits the gathering of the salmon trout.

They begin to come very soon, magnetized by the lovely fish-eggs; and with his peculiar-shaped spear Kin-da-shon takes them as fast as it can be lowered and raised.

It has been the work of a very short time to provide fish enough for the large household, and while they are being prepared for the evening meal Kin-da-shon takes his axe

upon his shoulder and starts out for wood, taking the direction of Kutwulhtoo.

After passing the point nearest by the trail to the sacred place of the medicine-men, he turns to the left toward the mountain. When he has come almost to the ascent he suddenly turns his face back toward his own village, and with caution, that there may be neither noise nor marks from his snow-shoes, he proceeds, peering right and left, in search of Kunulkoo's trap.

He has reached the point which is directly in line from the river, back *through* the images of the Ichts, and yet he has discovered no trap. He stops and looks keenly toward the mountain; it is plainly not in that direction. It cannot be nearer Klok-won—it *must* be nearer the place of offering to the demons. He will go a little nearer; he will make sure of its whereabouts, that he may be able to come in the dark and lose neither time nor himself. Involuntarily he shudders. What may he not encounter in carrying out his plan! But the thought of Kasko and of Kah-sha—yes, and of Tashekah!—nerves him to the effort. If he should find him, what rejoicing the little sister would have, and how happy he should be to have his brother once again!

Deeply engaged with his inner world, Kin-da-shon has moved on mechanically in the direction of the sacred images, nor has he noticed whither his steps are leading him, until suddenly his whole being is shocked and thrilled by the sight which meets his startled gaze.

The huge, rough-hewn images are almost within reach of his trembling hand. Before them is the nude figure of a man, writhing as in unspeakable torment. The back and breast and limbs of the man are stained with blood—the snow about him also bears evidence of his suffering.

As Kin-da-shon looks on in dumb amazement, he per-

ceives that by self-wrought gashes in the flesh the devotee is making an offering of his own blood, with cries and prayers brought from the depths of an agonized soul.

Only love's instinctive power could recognize in this gaunt and blood-stained creature the noble and handsome Kasko. But such instinct belonged to Kin-da-shon. He sees and knows the youth he loves. Wild, hollow eyes, from which the light of reason has fled, giving place to frenzy, haggard cheeks, bony arms, and hands with their talon-like nails—the long, shaggy mane—all fail to disguise the beloved friend who dreams of no approach.

The heart of Kin-da-shon rushes to his lips tumultuously, in its passage turning him sick and giddy. As he grasps at the nearest tree for support one word only escapes him:

"Kasko!"

As though smitten from heaven, the demented youth is arrested in his work of self-destruction! Wildly he gazes about in search of the voice. When his eyes have met those of Kin-da-shon, with a wild shriek he turns and has fled.

But Kin-da-shon's effort is not to be so easily frustrated. Dropping his axe, he pursues the maniac, who, through loss of blood and nervous reaction, falls helpless and unconscious before he has scaled half the height of rocky cliff leading to his covert.

Already the early winter night is setting in, and the house-fires of the village have been brightened until great volumes of ascending stars proceed from each roof-hole, as Kin-da-shon, bearing on his back his living but insentient burden, returns to his father's house.

Few questions are considered necessary by the family: they know that Kin-da-shon went for wood; he tells them that he found Kasko helpless and bleeding on the moun-

tain; it is natural and right that he should bring him home.

Kin-da-shon insists on himself tending his old-time friend. With his own blanket he has carried and covered him through the frosty night, and with it he now shields him from too close scrutiny on the part of others.

When the house is still and asleep he cuts close the long, tangled hair of his friend, and with the gentleness of a woman bathes the body. With his own garments he clothes him who has none, and, sitting by him, watches for the return of Kasko's *self*.

It is not until the first faint light of morning begins to greet the smoke, which Kin-da-shon has kept going up from their hearth all night, that, as he holds Kasko's hand and bathes his forehead and lips with the ball of snow he has freshly brought, the quivering eyelids open and Kasko's true self looks out at his faithful friend.

"Kasko," Kin-da-shon whispers, "do you know me, brother?"

"O Kin-da-shon!" And the great, hungry, hollow eyes fill with tears, the poor hand trembles in its loving pressure; then in utter weariness the eyelids fall. Bits of snow, wet in a cup of water, Kin-da-shon places between the lips of his friend, and presently the eyelids open and the dark eyes seek again the faithful face bent over in anxious attention as the white lips move.

"Why—*did* you—Kin-da-shon? I wrestled—with—the powers—of—darkness. I was just—discovering—how—to—*throw* them."

"No need, no need, Kasko brother. Your dear father has found a better way; he does not need that you should overcome the demons for him now."

"How? What do you—say? My *father?* What does he—say?"

"He said to tell you that he is well now—that he had found a friend stronger than all evil. He is safe and well now, he said."

"'Safe'? 'Well'? My *father*—is—safe and—well?"

"That is what he told me to tell you, and *more* than that. I will try to remember it all when you get more strength. Rest now, Kasko."

A heavenly smile, bringing to the gaunt face more than its early boyish beauty, has touched his eyes and mouth.

"Father," he murmurs again—"father—*safe*—and *well!* What friend—was—so—*strong?* Tell me—*now*—Kin-da-shon."

"The God he learned about at Fort Simpson, Kasko—the God who so loved the world that he gave his only son to come and save it. He found your father and took him home to make him well."

"Where? Where?"

"To the blessed country, up above."

"Can—*I* go? Do—*you*—know *how?* Is—the door—open?"

"I don't know," Kin-da-shon makes answer sadly; then, struck with a sudden faint recollection, he adds:

"Stop! It comes likes a dream; but I'm sure I heard the teacher say, if one knocks the door will open."

"The door—*where—is* it?"

"I—I don't know. I wish I had listened better. I was a happy boy, and I was thinking of—a little singing bird. I didn't seem to need anything else—and I didn't understand very well."

"But—*God—loved*——"

"Yes, yes; I know the very words he said about that, for your father said them over till we both had them in our hearts. 'God *so loved* the world that he gave his only Son.'"

"He—came—to save—*father?*"

"Yes; your father was very happy when he told me so."

"He—came with—God's—*love*—to—save—*me too?*"

"That's just what your father wanted me to tell you, and I couldn't bring back the words."

One poor, thin hand is lifted toward the pale stars shining down the smoky way; the deep, dark eyes, lustrous with new depths of spirit-beauty, are raised to heights beyond, while from the already death-chilled lips Kin-da-shon catches the low-breathed prayer:

"*God—love—save—me too.*"

Slowly sinking drops the cold hand to his breast. The look of peace grows deeper.

Kasko, the loving, is with the Father—beloved.

## CHAPTER XVII.

KIN-DA-SHON'S SON—THE RESCUE—AT YHIN-DA-STACHY—TO THE YUKON.

ANOTHER summer has come and gone. It is a forbidding early November day. Gray clouds go scurrying across the low, leaden sky, jostling from each other great showers which angry winds carry spitefully and dash in cutting sleet upon the earth.

From the woods some distance back of Klok-won Kin-da-shon is bringing on his back a huge bundle of green hemlock boughs and trailing behind him over the snow a lot of light poles, which, with the help of one of the older women of his father's household, he is soon forming into a booth, or place of retreat, for Kotch-kul-ah, his wife.

As he works thus, under the stinging sleet, his heart yearns over her who is so soon to be banished in her suffering to this frail shelter, and he strengthens anew the poles he has set and weaves more closely the boughs of hemlock.

A few hours later, from this same booth, mingling with the shrill voice of the winter wind, comes the first cry of a new creature—a little Kin-da-shon, awakening in the mother-heart an ecstatic response.

After being anointed with oil and wrapped in dry moss and pieces of blanket, the child is tied snugly into its basket and carried into the house for presentation to its father and relatives.

When, after ten days of exile, the young mother rejoins

the family, Kin-da-shon settles down to an increasing peace and quiet joy in his new possession.

As the months go by and little Kah-hlid-zeen (strong man), as the child is called, grows in strength and stature and develops intelligence, his many bright and winning ways draw more and more the father's heart, until at length regret is swallowed up—father-love consumes old emotions and heals old sorrows.

His boy is the joy and pride of Kin-da-shon's heart, and by reason of the child the mother grows more dear.

When Kah-hlid-zeen is a year and a half old he has learned to let the arrow fly while his father holds the bow, and toddling across the house brings it again to his father's knee.

On their canoe trips for berries and game he dips his toy paddle, trying to keep the time of his father's stroke. At their feasts his little round head is dressed in highly fantastic fashion, and, filled with the spirit of the occasion, his little body sways in perfect rhythm of movement to the songs of his people. Often, too, with his father's bow on his shoulder and his father's snow-shoes on his tiny moccasined feet, he struts about on mimic hunting-grounds—often falling, but never crying at such disaster.

Little Kah-hlid-zeen's second spring has come. Not yet has the ice broken on the slow-flowing river, nor have the snow depths on the mountains softened. The last trading party of the season is setting out for the interior—Kin-da-shon in higher spirits than have ever possessed him on such occasions since his first trip in the long ago, when his heart was young and hope was high.

As he fondles his boy, while Kotch-kul-ah adds a last touch to some handiwork of her own and places it with his pack of articles for trade, tender recollections fill his heart of that other setting out, and he turns with glad-

ness to this new happiness which has taken the place of what he had hoped for.

"Kotch-kul-ah, you are a good wife," he says, as he puts the boy into her arms; "keep the child safe."

And with that he joins his party, who are already in their canoes impatiently awaiting him.

Their route is the same as on that first trip which he has been thinking of, when he brought the beaded pouch for little Tashekah. It is the first time he has made the trip since then, having in the intervening seasons gone in from Klok-won to the westward.

Their boat glides down the rapids to Yhin-da-stachy, which he has not visited since his unhappy return from Fort Simpson. He has ever shrunk from doing so, but now he is looking forward with calmness to a meeting with those who once shook his heart.

Having made an early start from Klok-won, in order to reach the head of Dy-yâ inlet before night—a distance of fifty miles—there is to be no unnecessary delay at Yhin-da-stachy, for though the greater part of the distance is accomplished with so much ease, the portage of canoes and goods across the peninsula is tedious and heavy; and then, should head winds be encountered, the remaining twenty miles will be long.

Making the last turn in the rapids and coming out against the full tide, they find a high wind lashing the waters to a foam. So suddenly does it strike their boats, demanding attention and skill, that it is a moment before they discover a canoe in advance of their own party. It is heavily laden with wood and manned by two small boys. Even in a calm, the water must have been within three or four inches of the canoe's edge.

The little fellows have evidently expected to *drive* in, for their sheet is spread to the full, and even as the men

catch sight of it the little craft is whipped over and its burden turned into the sea.

The men themselves are but holding their own against the elements. The icy spray cuts like knives as it strikes their faces. Several attempts are made at landing before they finally succeed in getting ashore. As soon as they have done so they turn to look for the unfortunate children, whose empty boat has now been flung ashore with the roaring waves, and, with their breaking, broken. A few pieces of the wood are still being dashed about, and on one of these short logs the men descry two small hands clinging.

With the directness of an arrow Kin-da-shon has shot under the breaker, and with swift, strong strokes, timed to the waves, soon reaches the child, whose hands seem frozen to the log's rough bark—scarcely conscious of either his danger or his rescue.

His hands are loosened and his sturdy little body is thrown astride the log; then, holding and pushing before him his buoyant burden, Kin-da-shon seeks a landing further down among the mud flats, and succeeds in getting ashore with few bruises either to himself or the boy.

It is Kunz; a good deal shaken up, but he soon gets upon his feet and shares the anxiety of the now aroused village in regard to the fate of his companion. It was Chan-ka, nephew of Yealh-neddy, that was with him; and Yealh-neddy at this moment is lying within his wife's house, heavy with drunken sleep, a result of last night's feast, for which he had provided several boxes of hoots-a-noo of his own manufacture. Now, after several hours of wild excitement, he and many others are lying in disgusting stupefaction.

Already among those who have gathered on the beach

is heard the sound of wailing for the dead; but it is not such as is made for those who *die* on shore.

There is no death so held in terror by the Kling-gets as that by drowning—doomed as they believe such a soul is to eternal wandering in cold and pain, ever and vainly seeking rest.

The shrieks and the groans of the women are heard high above the thundering of the waters, which are dashing and breaking on the shore.

Some of the men have gone to look at the boat. As they turn over its ruined, broken hull they find the sail-sticks wedged into it and the sail curiously wrapped and caught between them.

Stop! There is something within. Can it be one of the logs? With haste they disentangle it, and—their shout is only unheard by the mourners because of their own shriller noises! But they are silenced when the men have taken up the body and start across to one of the dwellings.

It is indeed Chan-ka! And now great is the regret that Ka-kee is not at home. The medicine-man has gone to Chilkoot, and there is nothing for it but to do, without the medicine-spirit, what they can to restore the breath of the drowned boy.

Such women as Usha-shawet are speedily at work, and before Kin-da-shon and his party have refreshed themselves with food and made dry their clothing by the hospitable village fires, the boy is breathing and conscious, causing great talk and rejoicing among the people.

Kunz has restored himself to his household, of which, in his father's absence, he has felt himself the guardian and provider.

Sa-allie has gone herself and brought Kin-da-shon to their own fire, setting before him the hearty breakfast which she had kept warm for Kunz.

While he sits eating it she holds his clothing and dries it about the leaping flames.

At one corner of the hearth, on a little feather-bed, is the once chubby Ch-one. So greatly has his body shrunken that the head seems to have doubled its size, though the ears and nose are small and pinched and the mouth is sadly drawn. The eyes, however, are unnaturally large and bright, with a world of woe and appeal in them.

For a long time he sits in perfect silence, looking on with expression so wise and grave that at length his mother, with a silent gesture, calls Kin-da-shon's attention.

"He is always just like that," she says, in muffled tones.

"Does he walk?" Kin-da-shon asks.

"No: see!" And Sa-allie draws out the little shrivelled legs, crooked from long doubling under him.

"He has never stood on them since that dreadful night. All his life is in his head. You can see that he knows things that other people never think. He will never grow again, unless we find that witch."

At this the child lifts his wonderful eyes, with their strange light and darkness—their indefinable and haunting expression—to the face of Kin-da-shon, striking into his superstitious soul a terror that he dares not face—a realization of his own share in this child's blighted life. Has he not for more than two years known the hiding-place of this spirit of evil, and still has kept it hidden? What is he likely to get for his kindness to her? What can a witch give but evil?

In vain his heart tells him that it is Usha's own kindness which is being repaid by his silence; that to her he owes his own life, and Kotch-kul-ah's also; and more

than that, if his own and Kotch-kul-ah's, their little Kah-hlid-zeen's life as well.

His child! his son! Oh, what if—and again his eyes are fixed in horror on the child before him, who is still gazing into his face—what if such a thing as this should be visited on his own! And the strong man quails before the suggestion.

"Tashekah!"

The boy has turned to his mother, with this single word, in which he both beseeches and demands.

"Where *is* Tashekah?" Kin-da-shon asks, glad of the distraction.

"She is gone to Chilkoot, with her husband."

With a half-felt shock the words strike the heart of the man. Her husband—his little Tashekah's husband! But what is he thinking of? Surely the witches are beginning their work on him. He must get away; and hastily putting aside what is left of his breakfast, he prepares at once for his journey.

At this moment Kunz, who appears but little the worse for his morning's experience, enters the house with a message from the men, who are ready and anxious to start.

"And, mother, the people that came from Stickeen last night say that a trader—a white man—is coming to live in the Chilkat country!"

"A white man—coming to live in the Chilkat country! When?"

"At the end of summer—this next one."

"Worse and worse!" and the mother's face shows distress and vexation.

Kin-da-shon's movements slacken as he listens.

"Why is it worse, mother? Is it not good to sell skins and buy white man's things here instead of going away to Fort Simpson?"

"Hush! You know nothing about the white man. Do you think he's coming here to make *us* rich? Neh! if Sa-allie knows anything he will bring us plenty of trouble."

"Well, I can't see what trouble there is in having everything the white men have. Why, I know I could get skins enough myself to buy a gun, and *then* just think what I could do!"

"Hush, I tell you! Think what you could do *then?* Yes, it's easy enough to think of that. If you should try half as hard, maybe you could think of what Goosh-ta-heen did with his gun last winter when he killed his wife, and of all the trouble there's been between the tribes ever since!"

"But he was *drunk*, mother; he was crazy with hoots-a-noo. *I* would——"

"Drunk! crazy with hoots-a-noo, was he? Well, how did he come to have hoots-a-noo? Did the *Chilkats* get it from the devil? You silly boy! didn't you know that the white man taught the Kling-get people to make that blood-of-witches to kill themselves, and now sells them guns to help them do it quicker? 'Devils?' Yes, they are devils in white skins. I want to see none of them in this country."

"But not all are like that, Sa-allie," now puts in Kin-da-shon, rising under his slowly adjusted load. "I saw a white man in Fort Simpson who never made hoots-a-noo, and he sold no guns. He was there to teach the people very different things—things to do them good and make them glad—and he didn't do it to get rich, either. I wish we had one of that kind here!"

"Well, *I* don't! And it would take a good deal to make me believe there *is* such a white man. What does he know that we need to learn, anyway? Don't we know

enough to eat and keep warm? And is there any more we could do if we knew never so much?"

"What if he could teach us how to kill witches, and how to be full and happy after we are *done* living *here?*"

"What do devils know about that?"

"More than *we* do, likely. But the men who teach these things are not devils—at least, they say that being drunk and killing people are bad things; and they make the men [illegible] that do their way. But my brothers will be half-way [illegible]r the trail—and that without any good thoughts of me. I will hasten!"

Kunz springs to open the door for his friend. Kin-da-shon has taken two or three long strides, when, with a thought, he suddenly turns and puts his head in at the door again just long enough to say:

"When we were at Fort Simpson, two years ago, we asked them to send a teacher to Chilkat. Maybe that is who is coming, Sa-allie."

He is gone without waiting to hear her contemptuous grunt.

"If it is, what will he teach, mother?"

"Nothing—that I want *you* to learn," she shortly answers Kunz, and then turns with more tenderness to wipe Ch-one's wondering face.

Silently and persistently longing to see the white man—of whatever nature he may be—Kunz turns his attention to the rebuilding of the fire and getting himself something to eat.

When Yealh-neddy awakes from his drunken sleep it is with his natural love of evil intensified and with a beastly desire to hurt and destroy. One of his first sensations is that of cold; his head seems filled with fire, but his body is cold—shivering. He looks around him; he is alone; the fire is all but out.

"Devils!" he mutters; "they would like me to freeze!"

The feeble, wailing cry of a babe is heard as the door opens, and the thin, bent form of a woman comes into the room, the babe in her arms, and on her back a great bundle of beach-gathered wood.

As she sets her baby's basket-board, into which the child is securely bound, against the wall, she loosens the leathern strap about her shoulders, and, stooping, drops the wood beside the hearth.

"Lazy dog!" curses Yealh-neddy from his place on the other side; "you tried to kill me, did you?"

There is no answer from the woman. She is blowing the half-dead coals under a handful of dry moss.

"Answer me, slave!" yells Yealh-neddy, half-raising himself in his rage.

For one instant the woman lifts her face—such a wan, wrinkled, yet strangely young face, to that of her lord and master.

"I have not tried to kill you." Then the blowing is quietly resumed, but the poor, bony hands are shaking.

"Vile creature, you lie! Why else did you let this fire go out and fill the house with the breath of icebergs? Speak!"

"My baby was sick. I nursed it and went to sleep when it did," she answers, with hard patience.

"Baby! sick! *sleep*, did you?" shrieks the man, wild with passion. "I'll teach you to nurse the brat and sleep!" and almost with a single bound he seizes the child and flings it past her into the now blazing fire.

Out of the flames she snatches it, and springing over them herself she stands facing the fellow, with such light burning in her eyes as now for the first time makes it possible to recognize Sha-hehe.

"Yealh-neddy," she says, in a tone that has long

seemed gone with all her youth and fire—"Yealh-neddy, did I ask you for this child? Is it the fault of Sha-hehe that its sickly cries disturb your peace? Treat *me* as you *do*—worse than the dog you kick in its mothering; but this child is of your own flesh and blood. Be careful what you do."

Confounded as he is for an instant by her now infrequent resistance, she gains the door just in time to escape his cruel hands; and he will not follow his *slave* through the village, but stretches himself out by the comfortable fire.

Here Kah-de-guah finds him when she comes from gossiping over the morning's occurrences, ready to take *her* in hand because hot food is not awaiting him.

"Where have you been, woman?" he asks of his wife, not without a shade of—not respect, surely, but speaking *not* as he spoke to Sha-hehe.

"Do you speak to me, my husband?" asks Kah-da-guah, with the most exasperating coolness, which she knows he will not dare to resent. "I was getting news to please you. A company of Klok-won traders have just crossed the trail."

"What's that to me, old fool?"

"Oh, nothing, little bird, nothing to you. *Kin-da-shon was one of them.*"

"What's that you say?"

She is playing with the silver bracelets which cover her fat arms nearly to the elbows; she does not hear his question.

"Kin-da-shon, did you say?" he asks again, a little less uncivilly.

"Kin-da-shon? No, I do not say Kin-da-shon. Why should I say Kin-da-shon?" and she draws out a basket

of such odds and ends as, with Kling-get women, stand for an old lace bag or a trinket box.

Since Yealh-neddy has become an adept in distilling, hoots-a-noo is much oftener to be had than ever before in the Chilkat country; and through the quarrels and injuries, imagined and real, consequent upon its use, there have come to be such heart-burnings and jealousies and desires of revenge as threaten to bring the tribes to war.

Among the many hatreds which Yealh-neddy himself has nursed none is greater than that of Kotch-kul-ah; and ever since he heard of her marriage to Kin-da-shon he has but awaited the opportunity of accomplishing a revenge worthy his passion. The determination to have such revenge has but grown and strengthened in the dark. It has been with an understanding of her husband's interest that Kah-da-guah introduced the subject of Kin-da-shon's presence in Yhin-da-stachy.

Knowing that further questioning is useless with his independent spouse, Yealh-neddy begins to growl for his breakfast.

"Is there nothing to eat in this house?"

"Oh, yes; plenty, I think. What was it you took in the hunt yesterday—a mountain sheep? And last night—was it a bear? Yes: there is plenty, I should say."

"Call Sha-hehe to get me some dried fish," he says, half-cowed by her easy sarcasm.

But he knows that Kin-da-shon has gone to the land of the Gun-un-uh and that he cannot return for a month—six weeks, it may be. In the mean time Kotch-kul-ah is at Klok-won, without her husband.

His time has come: if he fails to use it he is not the son of Yealh that he knows himself.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE YOUNG MOTHER—YEALH-NEDDY'S PLOT.

"ISH, ish, my dear ish—say it, my baby; you must say it before ish comes again. See my lips—now try it again," and at his lisping she takes him into her bosom with passionate love.

"My little Kin-da-shon! my baby! my Kah-hlid-zeen!"

Many an hour is spent thus by Kotch-kul-ah with her baby, until the thrifty mother almost loses patience with her son's wife, and asks if love will keep them warm next winter or feed them.

"It will go more than half-way, good mother," the girl answers, with a bright laugh, in which is no trace of fear or care. And she tosses her baby over her shoulder, where he holds to her hair in a glee, and drives as she goes about her wool-dyeing and the dressing of skins.

"It is not you, my dear—my little one, my baby man—not you, nor me, but ish, yours and mine, Kin-da-shon; not the little but the great; *he* is our dear one, he is the one we are foolish about. *Tell* the good grandmother; it shall not shame me. Tell her, baby; say it—ish, ah, ish."

Toward the grandmother's corner, where she sits at her loom, turns the laughing, chubby face of the child as he says it.

"Iss, ah, iss," and his reward is the mother's dance all around the fireplace before they begin work again.

"Another seven days and the moon will be as great as it was when he started; we will begin to look for him

then," Kotch-kul-ah says. "It will not be too soon, will it, Shans-ga-gate-ish?"

"Not a day too soon," is his answer. Then in a tone too low for her ear he adds: "I like not these spring trips."

"Canoe coming! Canoe coming!" rings through the village, and soon, in common interest, all turn out to see the arrival and hear the news.

A number of guesses are made before the identity of the new-comers is decided.

The person first recognized is Yealh-neddy. Before his name is spoken Kotch-kul-ah has turned pale and gathers her toddling boy back into her arms, as if to shield him from some hurt. But already the native boy traits are showing; his eye cannot be turned from the approaching canoe, and he struggles to free himself from his mother's unconsciously tightening grasp.

At her side is Sha-ga-uk, who laughs at the contest and says:

"Do you think you can keep him always in your bosom, foolish girl?"

"I will not want to—when he can have his father's hand—but—oh, I wish that man's bones were in his box!"

"Let no other ear hear that. Kotch-kul-ah, you are daring the devil to think it."

"I know it—they are such friends! But ah clah, Sha-ga-uk, *must* he stay in your house?"

"If he is so pleased. You know he must."

"Then he will please to, be sure of that! What can we do, baby?" she cries, catching up the child in a torment of apprehension.

"You are foolish, Kotch-kul-ah. What can he do? What do you suppose he wants to do? It's coming three years now that you've been safely Kin-da-shon's wife."

"Will a lynx spring while his prey is in its hole?"

"I do not see your heart. Is not this house your strong place?"

"No—no—ah clah!" now half-sobs the girl. "You are good to me; but—with Kin-da-shon away I am out of doors; it is night, and my eyes are not as the eyes of the lynx."

Already Yealh-neddy's goods are being carried into the house of Shans-ga-gate; his intentions are thus far evident.

The Kling-get manner of coming and going on ordinary occasions, without salutation or farewell, spares often much embarrassment, and several days thus pass without a word between Kotch-kul-ah and Yealh-neddy.

But the child—with that strong contrariety which mothers refuse to acknowledge but continually encounter in their little ones, whose pure instincts, they say, lead them unerringly to trust only the noble and love the good—has made immediate friendship with the man; and he, to whom children are all brats and love is a thing unknown, has yet been pleased by the child's preference, and has even begun to see how it may be utilized against the woman he hates.

With displeasure and dismay Kotch-kul-ah has seen her boy worry out of her own arms and go, with the certainty of a spark flying upward, to the man of evil. With much ingenuity and with unremitting endeavor she has done what she could to keep the child from him, yet with an intuition which makes her fear to have her intention suspected.

A day comes when she is worn out with bootless effort, and in nervous desperation she takes up her baby into the blanket on her back, saying:

"I am going to Kutwulhtoo, ah clah Sha-ga-uk, to take the moccasins I have finished for the old chief."

"You will come again to-day?"

"Yes—no: I cannot tell. Have no trouble about me if I stay. I wish to weave a basket pattern of Yah-doos-kah's."

She is half-way to the neighboring village—entirely out of sight and sound of Klok-won—before she stays her hurried steps a moment to rest.

The resting-place she chooses is a gnarled, moss-grown tree, hanging low and heavy branches out over the river: into these she creeps, her "man little one" still on her back.

When she has settled herself into the great mossy arms she takes baby into her own, to have and to hold him without let or hindrance.

With a pout on his lip, which makes it lift the ring in his little pug nose, he takes his now freed stub toes into his small, indignant hands, saying:

"*Man—walk.*"

"Yes; man walk," laughs his delighted mother. "We will tell it to ish when he comes; *he* will say 'man walk,' too," and she covers him with kisses. All her fears are put aside. He is her own and Kin-da-shon is her own. She will be happy to-day—as free and happy as the birds—as happy as she was before Yealh-neddy came.

Higher up on the crotch of a lighter bough she puts her boy, and there, holding him by his little leathern shirt, she swings him free as air until his glee doubles her own joy.

"Look, Kin-da-shon, child," she says, now holding him over where he can see the spotted trout down in the sparkling, rushing water; "see the pretty fish with the bead flowers on their shirts. Some day will 'man walk,' and take the fish for mother. He shall have a spear, just the same as ish, and he shall take—come! let us count

them on your fingers—*klake*, *deh*, *nusk*, *dok-won*, *ke-jin;* now the other hand—kla-*du*-sha, deh a-du-sha, nusk-kla-du-sha, goosh-ook, jin-kaht; yes, he shall take ten—the hands of a man, and more; we'll count the toes, too: jin-*kaht*—kah-*klake*, jin kaht kah deh, jin *kaht*-kah-*nusk*, jin-kaht-kah-dok-won, jin-kaht-kah-kejin, jin*kaht*-kah-kla-*du*-sha, jinkaht-kah-deh-a-du-sha, jinkaht-kah-nusk-kla-du-sha, jinkaht-kah-goosh-ook—klake-kah; yes, twenty: one whole man—of fish!" And baby laughs at the tickling of his toes as if he understood it all, and his young mother laughs with him—neither of them noticing the warning rustle of the leaves nor seeing that their enemy is near, until suddenly startled by his voice.

Yealh-neddy's cunning had not failed to penetrate th innocent ruse of Kotch-kul-ah to rid herself of him. had not been blind to her aversion, though he had bu touched her through her child; but he had bided his time with a daily growing passion, and promised himself that the time should come soon. To-day's opportunity should certainly not beg. Soon after Kotch-kul-ah started he coolly took down her husband's fish-spear from the wall and said he would try his skill at fishing.

Passing out of the village by the Kutwulhtoo trail, he hailed Goosh-ta-heen, a kindred spirit, though weaker far than himself, and together they followed the steps of the woman.

Something of his plan he unfolded to his fellow, and when his quick eye and ear had discovered her position on the tree, he seemed to have reached the desired spot for fishing, and to be wholly unconscious of the proximity of any one save Goosh-ta-heen himself, to whom he gave a wink of intelligence and continued to speak as they threw themselves down on the ground.

Yealh-neddy has made sure of being within her hear-

ing, and at the same time to be screened from Kotch-kul-ah's sight by a thicket of rushes growing between them, giving her the impression that her presence has been undiscovered.

With swift anxiety at the sound of their voices, she tucks her now hungry babe down under her blanket; and he, content with such mother comfort, holds his peace and at length sleeps.

"Pay?" Yealh-neddy is saying; "are *blankets* the only pay a man can have for shame? Your words are not always the words of a fool, Goosh-ta-heen. Is there nothing to satisfy shame-hunger in seeing her a *slave?*"

"A slave?"

"Yes, a slave. What else is she? If not a slave, then worse—it matters little which you call it. It were easy to see, if a man were blind, what his people think of her. Bah! a woman that could ask a man to marry her—isn't that low enough? And then to follow him in the night to his mother's house, till for very shame they *call* them married! Kin-da-shon was too much ashamed to even show his face when his mother went to give blankets to Kotch-kul-ah's friends."

"Was that why he didn't go down to Yhin-da-stachy with them?"

"Yes: and then I suppose they were afraid he would see young Tashekah and kill himself."

"That's a thing new to me. What had he to do with Tashekah? That's Ka-kee's wife, isn't it? A pretty girl—but what had Kin-da-shon to do with her?"

"What *didn't* he have to do with her? Do you think she would have been Ka-kee's wife if Kin-da-shon could have got home to his mother without being caught by that girl, Kotch-kul-ah? Why, Tashekah wears his love-gift around her neck now! Ka-kee doesn't know it, though."

"That's a good thing to know. You've got it in your quiver, haven't you, Yealh-neddy?"

"Ah! Yealh-neddy's quiver holds more than that of things that will stick when they are shot."

"When did that begin with Tashekah?"

"*I* knew it before Kin-da-shon began to pull his beard. He gave her a fine present the first time he ever went into the Stick country; and her father carried it home to her."

"Kin-da-shon was with her father when he died, wasn't he?"

"Yes; and so was I. They were together all the time. It was all settled that Kin-da-shon should have his wife when they got back to Yhin-da-stachy. Kah-sha died before they got back, but Kin-da-shon got Tashekah all the same. I saw her in his arms myself—just before he started to Klok-won."

"And when he got here he was already married to Kotch-kul-ah!"

"Yes; that's the reason, of course, that she ran away from me—she meant to throw herself on Kin-da-shon."

How much more was said Kotch-kul-ah never knew. From the first sentence which caught her ears to the last which reached her brain, she had seemed to be in a torment of ice and fire—held immovable by the ice-field about her heart and burned by the slow torture of every word they uttered, until, with the ease of such natures as live a life in a moment, sense slept; and, held secure as she was by the close arms of the tree, she sank back and knew nothing more until, cramped and chilled—*dead* her body seemed to be, and wet with dew—she at last rouses with the nestling and fretting of the frightened child in her arms, whose nursing has stirred and started the tired life-flood.

Flooding back with it comes all the shame. How can

she live? Where can she go? Not at this hour to Klokwon with Yealh-neddy there! To Kutwulhtoo, then—and the people believing her shameless? What may they not think of her being abroad alone in the night?

"O Kin-da-shon, my husband!" But even as her heart utters the cry bitter comes the mocking echo: "Husband!"

Except the shame of conjugal love between two of the same tribe or an exposure of her own person, there is no shame to the Kling-get woman like that of yielding her *woman's right* to be *sought* and *bought;* and shame, as the Kling-gets define and hold it, is the most prolific cause of trouble and suicide among both sexes. Suicide is the *way out*, and very often it is the only way out.

Sitting there in her darkness and bitterness, Kotch-kulah feels herself more utterly alone than ever before.

Heavy as is this weight of shame, it is as nothing to this other—that Kin-da-shon is not her own—that his heart has all these years been yearning for another. *Shame* she *dared*, though not realizing all that it seems others had thought of her. It had been but a light burden, Kin-da-shon bearing equally with her—for *love's* sake. She has been so happy it has never occurred to her that her husband's heart was not as her own. He has been often grave, but she thought that was because he was a man—wiser and greater than she. It was the *little* bird's part to sing and to flutter, the *eagles* soar high and noiselessly.

But now!—oh, he has been so good to her! He saw her love and her trouble and took care of her! He thought he owed his life to her—and she had let him give it, when his heart was breaking for another! He saw and felt her shame, and would not let her bear it alone. Oh, if she had only died! Why didn't Usha bewitch

her? Ah! she had forgotten in her happiness; but now, with the thought of Usha and witch-work, comes rushing into her heart and brain the curses ever sure to fall on those who put out a hand in aid of these powers of darkness.

"They have got me!" she cries; "that is it. Why did I not let you die, Sha-hehe? Why did I not bruise you enough to kill your demon? O Usha—did you help me to live only that I might get the more hurt?"

Many things in her husband's manner, unthought of in her happy fulness of heart, come back to her now with new and terrible meaning.

"He has never loved me—his heart has died as mine would have died without him—as it is dying now! He has never gone back to Yhin-da-stachy till now; he has been afraid to go! But *now*—he will see Tashekah. Now his love will be greater than before, and the woman who came between them he will hate!"

What will come of it? What can she do? She thinks again of Usha-shawet, but she could not keep her *baby there.* She thinks of death, but her child is Kin-da-shon's and he loves him—and the baby needs her yet—she *must* live!

But now—to-night! What for to-night? She cannot go to either Klok-won or Kutwulhtoo before morning. If she stays where she is, Kin-da-shon's mother will think she has stayed at Kutwulhtoo, and the Kutwulhtoo people will not know that she had left her home.

She can only stay where she is; but her limbs are so numb—she must try to stir them a little. She tries to move along down the tree, but, with her baby, fears to trust herself; so she settles back again to wait for daylight, and at length both she and the child sleep.

When Kotch-kul-ah awakes again, it is again the child who has called her back—this time to the broad glare of

day, in which shame is doubly shameful and hopelessness becomes despair.

It is the hard light which she feels first; then the shame, and then the despair.

"O baby, don't cry!" she says, as she holds him still closer to her heart. But now he does cry, and struggles so that her benumbed arms tremble with the effort to hold him.

"Man—walk!" he cries, and the words bring back strange echoes, as of a day in another world—a life long past.

"Man—walk!" the baby demands again, and this time with kickings so violent that his mother's grasp is powerless to keep him; and she but half-realizes that he has gone when she hears the splash in the waters below—the swift, dark-flowing waters, where yesterday she had shown him the fishes shining in the sunlight!

She tries to loosen herself from the tree—to fling herself down after him; but before her heavy body is free a strong arm is thrust out from the [illegible] below her, and now—O joy!—her boy has been caught by his little leathern shirt on a bare, dead, broken branch which droops into the river. He may be dead; but he has not been carried down with the current—his little body can be burned.

A moment more and she sees her darling swung by the heels and choking; and then—joy and horror!—he is *alive* —in *Yealh-neddy's arms!* With a cry of—she knows not which emotion—Kotch-kul-ah covers her face and cowers down, trembling and helpless.

"Come, Kotch-kul-ah, you had better go home," he says; "here is your boy."

She tries to move, but her limbs refuse to obey.

"Come, get your young one; I don't want him!"

Vainly she tries again. She is frightened at her condition; she tries to speak, but a strange, inarticulate sound is all that escapes her lips.

Yealh-neddy drops the child upon the ground, muttering as he ascends the tree, and takes a bottle from his pouch—a bottle gotten in the south country, and covered by Kah-da-guah with woven grass. He grasps Kotch-kul-ah's hair, throws back her head, and forcing the opened bottle into her mouth, pours the clear liquid down her throat.

Pure liquid fire it seems to the strangling woman—mouth, throat, and stomach are filled with such strange burning. But in a moment she feels it flying through her veins; fingers and toes tingle; her head grows both full and light. She can go now, she says, in a voice not quite her own, and she even feels grateful to Yealh-neddy. If he will help her a little. She is strong, but not quite steady yet. She needs to get down on her feet. If Yealh-neddy will help her a little she will go down to baby; and then she will soon be right and go home.

With that in his face which she cannot now appreciate or fear, he takes her by the arm and almost lifts her down. She takes up her shivering child, strips him of his wet shirt, and gathers him into her bosom, where he soon recovers warmth and vigor. Then folding him into her blanket, she takes him on her back and starts toward Klok-won, with Yealh-neddy behind her.

Faster and faster fly her steps, until, having made the turn of the trail—the very point where she and Kin-da-shon left the canoe and Usha and went alone together to his mother's house, in the dim morning light which was so sweet and strange to her then and has been so sweet and familiar ever since until now—having come to this point, with these recollections in her heart and

the village in full view before her, and the fire medicine in her blood having burned low, heart and flesh seem to fail her. She staggers, and at length sits down by the trail and buries her face in her hands on her shaking knees.

"What's the matter now?" It is Yealh-neddy's voice, and she shudders perceptibly.

"Go on—take your young one home; or do you want me to take it?"

"No—no!" she cries; "but I can't go; my strength is gone from me."

"You are sick—you want more medicine?"

"What is that medicine, Yealh-neddy?"

"Spirit—life—it will bring the dead to life. Don't you believe it?"

"I don't know. It's from the devil, I'm afraid; but it made me strong. Yes, if you will give it I will take a little more—I *must* go home!"

"See here, girl; I don't owe you much good, but you may have this bottle if you keep it quiet; it's a friend for trouble." And tossing the bottle into the grass at her feet he moves on, with his borrowed fishing-spear over his shoulder, toward the house of Shans-ga-gate, nor turns his head to look until he has reached the door; *then* he sees her with the bottle raised to her lips.

Breakfast engages the household as Yealh-neddy enters; and he, seating himself within reach of the boiled fish-eggs, draws from his pouch his own spoon and proceeds to help himself.

His appearance has been greeted with *looks* of inquiry only; but after a time Shans-ga-gate, with a sly smile, asks:

"Who carries your *fish*, Yealh-neddy?"

"Kotch-kul-ah—and the river," is his ready answer.

"Kotch-kul-ah!" exclaims Sha-ga-uk, in utter consternation, hardly noticing the strangeness of his answer as a whole—"Kotch-kul-ah! What has *she* got to do with your fish?"

"Maybe she can tell you."

"Have *you* been to Kutwulhtoo?"

"No—only part way."

"Where is Kotch-kul-ah?"

"Coming—at the door, I think."

More and more mystified, Sha-ga-uk glances at the door, which gives no sign of any coming; then, unable to restrain herself further, she rises and goes to the door.

On stepping outside, she sees Kotch-kul-ah but a few steps off, and waits till she comes nearer.

The strangeness of her appearance and manner would seem to match that of Yealh-neddy's speech. What are the witches working among them?

"Kotch-kul-ah, where are you from?" comes in more peremptory fashion than any question ever before put by her mother-in-law.

"From—from the river," stammers the girl, with an utterance strange and thick.

"What do you mean? Where did you sleep last night? Speak! answer me!" Sha-ga-uk almost screams, as Kotch-kul-ah stands looking this way and that, her lips moving without a sound. But, roused at length by the elder woman's vehemence, the girl laughs, while tears flow from her eyes—eyes that show no resemblance to Kotch-kul-ah's—as she answers:

"On a—a tr—tree," and again the silly laugh.

"Girl!" And in a second Sha-ga-uk is beside her. She knows the effect and the smell, and it may be the taste of hoots-a-noo. Nothing could exceed her horror and disgust at this discovery.

"Girl, who gave you drink? Where did you get this stuff?"

"Yealh-neddy—give—medicine—good medicine."

"Yealh-neddy!" shrilly demands the mother. "What has any honest wife to do with Yealh-neddy, I want to know? O Kin-da-shon! my son, my son! To think she has fallen so low!" Then to the girl:

"Give me the child, woman!" And with strong, ungentle hands she forces down the blanket and takes from it the naked child.

"Where is his shirt, you vile creature?"

Fumbling with half-senseless hands, from the upper half of her dress—held in place by a string of leather about the waist, thus forming a receptacle for various things—the poor girl draws out not only the soaked little shirt, but one of the moccasins which she had gone to carry.

Snatching the shirt, Kin-da-shon's mother looks at it with angry questioning, disdaining the moccasin. Then, as though realizing the uselessness of further words, she turns, and taking Kotch-kul-ah by the shoulder pushes her into the house, and following, makes her lie down in the corner near the door, where she leaves her to herself.

A week has passed—the Kling-get week, marked by seven settings of the sun, but unmarked by any seventh of blessed rest or joyous rising of the hope of resurrection.

It has been a week of daily increasing anguish to Kotch-kul-ah, upon whom has fallen the unlifting blight of public dishonor, which needs only the small additional evidence of an eye-witness to her infidelity to cause her to be driven naked through the village at the head of a jeering rabble, and killed, that her husband's shame may be atoned for.

So slight is this missing link considered in the face of what is already known—her night out with a man of

Yealh-neddy's well-known character, her drunkenness, and Yealh-neddy's nonchalance and innuendoes—that existence itself is made slow, undying death to the girl; and this is but added to the eating of heart in regard to her husband.

He has failed to come with the other men who arrived the day after her shame was proclaimed. She had thought at first that she might tell him what it were worse than useless to tell any one else—the true history of that day and night. She thought that for their baby's sake he might listen. Then, he had been so good, he had done so much, he *might* believe her; and—vain hope!—she knew it was—might cover her from the people.

But now! he has stopped by the way; his love for Tashekah has kept him. When he comes will he not even rejoice that she who has held him can hold him no more? She will go away; she will leave him his son, and she will go where she can die in peace.

"His son," did she say? *No!* he is *her* son—the son of a woman dishonored He will never be known as the son of Kin-da-shon the good, but ever and ever the son of vile Kotch-kul-ah! They will make of him a slave—the lowest of her tribe. Never! She will never leave her baby to such a fate as that. It were better to kill him with her own hand.

The thought of flight grows upon her. She will go; she *must* go! Her mother's mother was a Sitka woman. If there is any place for her on earth it is there, among her own family. She will try it. She will take Kin-da-shon's own canoe, the little one in which they have so often gone hunting and fishing together. She will go in the night.

But she has eaten nothing for so many days she fears her strength may fail her. Even now she is trembling

like the birch leaves she used to watch and love as they shook their sweetness out upon the soft south wind. The memory makes her sick and giddy.

In her weakness her fears increase. She is even afraid that she has not the courage to risk the effort of getting away. She thinks of Yealh-neddy's wonderful "life-water," and recoils at the thought. Yet that would help her to get away; it would drown her fears and give her courage. He has the bottle. It was empty, but he has more to put in it; he told her so, and that if she wanted more she might have it. Even Yealh-neddy is kinder than Kin-da-shon's friends. How is it—hating him as she does? She must ask him to give her the bottle again. She will tell him that she is sick, and indeed she is more sick than ever she has been before.

The night has come, the bottle is in her possession, the canoe is safely hidden in the long grass at the point; for she has fancied to start from the place where she and Kin-da-shon began to be alone together.

She has gotten together in a little pack what she must have to keep herself alive and to make baby comfortable. The village is quiet; the people are asleep.

Her new place by the door, showing her degradation, is at least more easily escaped from than her old place of honor beyond the fire.

She is out; she has reached the point—coming almost breathlessly, and with a swiftness that in her weakened condition leaves her exhausted. She sinks down, under her double burden of boy and bundle, turning her hot face into the frosty last year's grass lying gray and dead above the tender shoots already started by a few bright suns. She lies a long time so.

Stirring herself at last, she sits up and looks about her. It is so dark she cannot see even the water. It is such a

night as the spirits of evil love. She is so alone—fearfully alone! Her heart fails her, yet she dares not return to the village. She tries to rise to her feet, but her shaking limbs will not bear her. Helpless, she drops again to the kindly earth beside her sleeping babe. She will wait a little. When it grows lighter with the old moon by and by she will be stronger.

She is shivering. She thrusts her cold hands into her bosom—what is that? The bottle! She had forgotten it. It is now that she needs it. And drawing it out, she raises it to her unwilling lips and—she has swallowed of it—once, twice! Ah! it is the life she needs; it is *strength!* More—more! She will be able to do what she must. That will do. She is too weary to put the stopper in the bottle now. After her strength has more fully come she will fix it. What warmth creeps through her frame! How soft the grass is, and how sweet to rest on! Strength is coming; she will soon be ready to go. Just a little more of resting till the moon comes!

Lying prone upon the ground there, clutching the uncorked bottle—her babe a few paces off in the grass, the bundle between them, Yealh-neddy, in the twilight of the morning, discovers the wife of Kin-da-shon in heavy, drunken stupor.

With a hoot of such gratification as fiends know, he approaches the prostrate woman, and with his foot turns her to one side. A heavy snore is all the sign she makes. At the same moment his ear detects the dip of paddles, and stretching himself low in the grass he watches the canoe approaching from the south. It is coming to this very spot! Quickly dropping his face upon his folded arms, Yealh-neddy feigns sleep.

## CHAPTER XIX.

KIN-DA-SHON'S RETURN FROM THE YUKON—KOTCH-KUL-AH'S FLIGHT.

"BUT, Kin-da-shon, I have been over this trail more times than I have fingers and toes to count them on. I tell you it is best to go no farther. We have made a middling trade, and now we must be back before the rain begins to fall and the mountain's snow to soften."

It was Chuh-le, one of the older men of the party, who spoke.

"I know it, Chuh-le; and you must not wait for me. But Koon-teh says that his house is not above a short sun's journey from here, and his wife has finished by this time just such a black-fox robe as I want for Kotch-kul-ah. I can't go back without it."

"Would you throw life to the ravens for the sake of one more fox-skin, young man?"

"No: neither your life nor mine; but I will gladly take the extra run and risk the rains—not for you, but for myself—to see the suns rise in my good wife's eyes."

"Don't be too sure that they wont *set* in your own forever! I don't like it, Kin-da-shon. I wish you would come."

"Beg no trouble, good friend, and waste no time for us both. You must all go on just as if I went too; and *I*—my legs are young and long, you know. I will go with Koon-teh to-day, and come again by this time to-morrow. The third day I will overtake you as you enter the pass. Go now!" And turning lightly, having given

the skins he had already traded for into the keeping of his man, he joined Koon-teh, who some time ago took the trail up the river.

Chuh-le shook his head as he looked after him, but, with his own pack already on his shoulders, he turned and took the lead of his party in the opposite direction.

On the third day, when they had reached the pass, the party halted, and making a fire refreshed themselves with food and sleep. A longer rest than on ordinary occasions they allowed themselves, in the hope that Kin-da-shon would join them.

But the clouds were moving swiftly and low, and their breath was from the southern sea. Time was precious and life was dear. By losing one they were risking the other. They must go on without him.

Up they went, now and again turning to look back over the lower trail, and sometimes firing a gun, hoping to get an answering signal; but they reached the cloud-swathed summit without a sign of their tardy comrade. Already the rain had begun to fall, and on the descent they found it blinding and perilous.

Before taking to their canoes at the end of the trail another long halt was made. Then, seeing no indication of his coming, their journey was resumed and in due time completed.

In the mean time Kin-da-shon, after making a satisfactory bargain with Koon-teh and his wife, started gayly on the return trip. Short was the rest he gave himself, for both heart and pack were light; and he made even longer legs than he had promised.

"I will be with them to-night," he laughed to himself. "Chuh-le shall say that neither my head nor my feet are soft when he finds me sleeping beside him to-morrow."

He was within half a day's tramp of the last camp

before the ascent, when, in some unaccountable way, he made a misstep, spraining his ankle; and though he made nothing of it for a time, the pain became more and more severe and the foot so swollen that he was obliged to stop and cut the leather of his soft boot. The lameness increased, and so retarded his movements that night found him more than one such day's journey from his friends.

When he found himself obliged to halt for the night, it was on a dreary stretch of snow, without so much as a twig with which to make a fire. Digging out a hole in the snow, he crawled into it and slept until the pain awakened him.

Finding after a time that he could see to travel by the late moon's light, though herself was unseen through the thick atmosphere, he again took up the march. And so, day after day, as he could drag the heavy painful limb, he made by slow degrees the tedious ascent, and with somewhat lightened heart started down the long and dangerous decline.

He had not gone many yards, however, down the tortuous way before he discovered that all trace of the trail was lost, and that at every step the snow became more soft and treacherous.

Now and then he was startled by an ominous roar, as of raging waters underneath the honey-combed snow he was treading. Once it seemed to be trembling, and he sat down, half-paralyzed, to see from another spur of the mountain a field of ice fifty feet in depth and more than twice that in breadth go thundering down into an abyss, which made him shudder.

Snow-shoes he soon found useless, and himself unable even to carry them. There were places where he was obliged to lie down against his little pack and slide. Again, turning on his face, he went clinging with toes

and fingers, scarcely breathing, lest the final impulse should be given the mass beneath him. At times, in taking a step, he sank into the softened snow to his outstretched arms, and struggled slowly and cautiously out of the grave until his body lay its outspread length and breadth on the surface again.

Half of the descent had thus been made. He had not felt the pain in his limb, so tense had been the strain on his whole being; but the time seemed an eternity, and looking down from his dizzy height there seemed no end to reach.

He had come to the edge of a long glare of harder snow —more precipitous than the last he had struggled through; and finding himself almost exhausted he fastened his fingers and toes into it, and lay resting before he should begin the fearful feat of crossing its sheeny surface.

Suddenly he became aware of the frightful roaring which always made his heart stand still. It grew louder —nearer! The mass beneath him shuddered, creaked, rocked, and then, as though heaven and earth had parted, with a noise as of the bursting of worlds, Kin-da-shon felt himself hurled into chaos.

Down, down, forever down! His eyes lost the power of sight; his ears burst; there was the crash of a shattered universe, and the atom, Kin-da-shon, ceased to have an identity.

As an unknown quantity in an unknown sphere Kin-da-shon awoke—if that may be called waking where there is neither feeling nor conscious thought; where knowledge of naught past can make comparison with aught present.

Where? whence? whither? were questions that did not rise to perplex him; neither when nor how.

Moved by an impulse which sprang from no intelligent

volition of his own, he extricated himself from the débris of the avalanche, the course of which had been directly toward the canyon from which flowed the creek at the head of Inlet Dy-yâ.

By the same power he found a small canoe, left by Chuh-le in the rushes, in which he launched upon the noisy, rapid, swollen stream, and was borne swiftly out to the inlet.

The flood-tide was just beginning to ebb, and the wind was falling back with it also. Together they carried the little boat straight out to channel. Once there, it could not long have been drifting about before it was discovered by Ka-kee and Tashekah, just returning with full sail from Chilkoot.

Thinking it to have been carried out by an unwatched tide from some hunting-party, they paddle across to make investigation. Great was their horror at the unexpected sight of the silent form lying within the drifting boat.

After coming to themselves, Tashekah implored Ka-kee to allow her to draw the boat after them to the portage, where they could examine it further. This was finally done.

They were yet a little distance from Portage Bay, when a shout came from the wooded shore. They answered, and found by the second call that Chuh-le and a helper were making a canoe among the trees of cottonwood.

Chuh-le, still anxious for Kin-da-shon, had been daily on the lookout, hailing every canoe that came into sight from above. When in response to his urging Ka-kee came within easy speaking distance, the sight of the canoe in tow caused his heart to leap.

"Where did you get that canoe?" he asked, unable to see him who lay within it.

"Drifting—from Dy-yâ;" then, cautiously, "Do you know it?"

"It is mine.

"From where?"

"From the inlet's head."

"Who has taken it out?"

"How can I tell? The spirit of the mountains, maybe!"

A momentary pallor overspread the faces of the two who had the boat in charge, but almost instantly Ka-kee recovered himself enough to say with assumed lightness:

"We've got him with us, then."

"What do you mean?" Chuh-le demands, dropping his adze and coming to the water's edge.

"Come and see," Ka-kee said, making steadily to shore, relieved to share the burden which had been growing no lighter as they neared the portage.

"It is Kin-da-shon!" groaned Chuh-le in a voice of mingled pain and terror, "Kin-da-shon, poor man!" Then, after a moment's thought, during which his own feelings too greatly absorbed him to allow any notice of the man and woman sitting before him:

"Let us go with you and help to take him home."

To this plan Ka-kee very readily agreed, and taking Chuh-le and his man into his own canoe, they soon reached the Da-shu trail.

A litter was then made by tying a blanket on two poles which were carried on the shoulders of Chuh-le and his man, disturbing the body—in which they had discovered that life was not extinct—as little as possible; and it was thus borne to the village Yhin-da-stachy, Tashekah and Ka-kee following with their packs.

The gradual coming back of life and thought, lifting the curtains of memory and quickening realization—these experiences of Kin-da-shon's let us pass them over—

physical agony also when the circulation sought its accustomed channels. Poor mangled and frozen body! The outward grandeur of the man was gone forever.

Of the long, supple feet, whose tread had been so light and fleet and elastic, nothing remained but the black, swollen, toeless stumps. The hands, too, strong and full of character, but slender and delicate as a woman's—where was their beauty and their cunning? The thumbs and two or three of the fingers were all that could be saved to their deformed bodies.

Great kindness was shown the sufferer by the Yhin-da-stachy people, but Kin-da-shon longed to get home; and as soon as possible they made a box-litter, in which he could sit or lie and be carried from place to place without disturbing the body, now racked more and more with pain.

They took him home—Ka-kee and Chuh-le—he lying in the canoe, while they walked much of the way, drawing it with a rope to avoid the lurching which would have been caused by poling it through the shallows.

At the dreary close of the first day Kutwulhtoo was reached, and the tired men gladly shared the shelter and the supper of their friends; while Kin-da-shon, too thoughtful and unselfish to demur, felt the—for him sleepless—delay was hardly to be endured; the more hardly endured because so very near his home.

More and more, through the long hours of waking and suffering, his heart ran before him to his boy, his baby—dearer than ever child was to a father before—and to the baby's mother. How good she was to him always, and tender! How all these years she had warmed him with her love! When his own heart was cold and dead she had brought him light and warmth and love. Yes, he *loved* her. He felt *that* more and more. He would tell her so when he got home. He would make her glad.

Then for the first time came thoughts of his ruined, broken body—his helplessness, so despicable in a man! What had he now to give her? A burden of broken, suffering flesh! His heart groaned in deeper suffering than his flesh had ever known.

"And this is how I shall make her glad!" was his bitter thought.

But gradually, as the night wore on, the edge of this keen pain was worn dull with grinding, and softer thoughts came.

"Kotch-kul-ah loves me. She will not hate my deformity." And as that thought grew, the desire for her sympathy and for the tenderness of her touch became so strong that he called his friends and urged them to get started.

Without any alarming haste they complied, and stolidly climbed the river again. As they proceeded Kin-da-shon became impressed with the similarity of his present homecoming to that of nearly three years before, when Usha and Kotch-kul-ah brought him.

It is almost the same hour of the morning. The same pale blue is about him, with the white mist hanging above as it did then. He recalls the early crying of the village dogs, and Kotch-kul-ah's tears, which he did not understand. He thinks he understands them now. At this very moment his ears catch the same familiar sound, and to his own eyes it brings a mist of tears.

So lost has he become in the memory now grown tender that he would not have one link broken.

"Take me ashore at the point, good friends," he says; and they, thinking it a sick man's idle whim, pay no attention, but make for the village beach.

"Stop, then! let me go alone! I *must go* ashore at the point!" Then, half-frightened at his feverish anger,

they obey, and a moment later bear him on his litter to the top of the bank, where, standing an instant undecided how to proceed, they advance a few steps, lay their burden on the grass, and turn to make secure their canoe and blankets. This has not been half-accomplished when there comes from Kin-da-shon such a shriek as never before has startled their dull ears. When they turn he is sitting up in his litter, staring before him with such an expression as hell itself might cause.

Though confident that he is suffering from delirium, they follow his gaze and retrace their steps. What—what is this?

There, almost within a well man's reach, lying before Kin-da-shon are—Yealh-neddy and Kotch-kul-ah! Yes—and her baby! Its father's shriek has awakened and frightened it. There in the wet grass, untended and alone, his baby—Kotch-kul-ah's baby—sits crying!

"Give him to me," Kin-da-shon presently says, in a voice they have never heard before.

They bring the frightened, struggling child, and the father essays to take it in his arms. The futility of the effort and the now wondering eyes of the babe complete the man's undoing. Turning his white, strong face into the coverings of the litter, he makes neither moan nor outcry.

They lay the babe beside his unconscious mother, and bearing the litter back to their canoe—all unheeded and unchecked—their swift, steady paddles soon bring them to the village, which for Kin-da-shon is forever homeless.

Yealh-neddy's revenge is almost complete. He is ready to release his victim, since her life's wrecking is assured. It is not a part of his purpose that she shall pay the life penalty to satisfy her husband's people. He

owes *them* more sting than that. Moreover, a longer stay in Klok-won is not convenient to himself.

Ere her broken husband has been borne to the still unawakened village Yealh-neddy has dragged the unknowing Kotch-kul-ah down the bank and placed her in the canoe which she herself had hidden. Bringing then her bundle and her baby, with equal tenderness, he throws them in over her, and, pushing off, springs in himself and is out of sight from the village before its people have even discovered that a canoe is approaching. The men —Ka-kee and Chuh-le—bending to their paddles, with thoughts on what they have seen and their faces villageward, have no suspicion of Yealh-neddy's movements. Even Kutwulhtoo is still asleep as the little boat glides swiftly and noiselessly by its grassy doorways.

The keen, fresh air has its effect in awaking and reviving the miserable Kotch-kul-ah. When, after a few hours' run, they reach Yhin-da-stachy, she is able to carry her bundle and her baby up to her mother's house.

Yealh-neddy has told her only what it has suited his purpose to have her know of her husband's arrival, and how he—Yealh-neddy—had rescued her from shame and death.

The meeting between herself and her mother is wordless and without demonstration of feeling of any sort. She learns that a canoe has but a few hours ago arrived from Sitka to trade for oil, and that they wish to return by the first tide to-morrow if the wind is fair. Arrangements are soon made by which Kotch-kul-ah is to accompany them.

As the evening draws on Kotch-kul-ah sits, lonely and apart, in the great house, almost too numb to fear anything or to realize her distresses, except that just whichever way she turns there is darkness and suffering and a

hopeless dragging of life. Her baby has fallen asleep in her arms. She has *him*, but what shall she do with him? That is as dark as all the rest.

Sitting thus in the gloom she does not notice the slow, silent approach of a woman—a woman younger than herself—does not notice until the woman has come very near and sits looking with shy and kindly eyes up into her own, so heavy and sad. She has not even noticed the eyes until touched gently by the woman's small, smooth hand. Younger, and she is smaller than Kotch-kul-ah. Her dress is a print of delicate pattern and of the nicest workmanship. Everything about her betokens a gentle and refined spirit. The face is not so handsome as Kotch-kul-ah's own, but it is round and smooth and has a healthy color. It has, withal, an expression of truth and strength and simple sincerity, such as wins you as soon as the trusting eyes have looked into yours; and then, when the mouth has smiled, you know that you could not distrust the indwelling soul of that woman, with the world's evidence against it.

Kotch-kul-ah sits and gazes at her until she has felt all this, and feels not so sure that *somewhere* there may not be a little light. Then—

"You are Tashekah?"

"Ah!" with a shy dropping of the eyes.

"Why did you come here?"

Without a word the little brown hands take from under her blanket a small basket of fresh, white herring eggs—an early spring delicacy—and a curiously-carved bone dish of the pure, white oulachan oil, and set them before Kotch-kul-ah.

"You have eaten nothing; you cannot have a strong heart," she says.

"What is that to—[illegible]ne?" the weary Kotch-kul-ah

asks, her heart touched enough to make her lips ungracious.

An instant's silence, with a pained, questioning look in the child-like face, then:

"You are cold," the gentle voice says. "Wait: I have tea that my father got at Fort Simpson. I will bring you some; it will do you good," and she has gone.

Kotch-kul-ah lays her sleeping babe down against the wall beside her, and covering her face on her knees, sits so until aroused again by the same peculiar touch. There is Tashekah low at her side, with a bowl of steaming, fragrant tea.

"Drink it, dear!"

Taking the bowl into her own hands, Kotch-kul-ah drinks it eagerly. Then, handing back the cup, she says:

"It is good; it—is like *you!*"

With a look of gladness Tashekah is about to go, when Kotch-kul-ah catches at her dress.

"Wait! Give me your hand!" And taking one from a number of silver bracelets on her own arm she fastens it on the slender wrist of Tashekah.

"You will never see me again, but you will think of me many times; and *I*—I will not forget you. Be happy!"

Tashekah looks in tender wonder, while Kotch-kul-ah, with a passionate gesture, covers her head and creeps closer to her baby. Then, taking up her bowl, the child-woman goes silently back to her little corner in the house of Ka-kee, where soon she is wrapped in dreams of peace; nor knows when, a few hours later, the storm-tossed Kotch-kul-ah sets sail with the trading people for Sitka.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A BIT OF HISTORY.

IT was no idle rumor which led the people to expect a white trader that fall. It was on a crisp, bright morning in October when the intelligence was brought into Yhin-da-stachy that he had arrived on a boat that ate fire and breathed like a porpoise; that he had brought boards as many as six men could hew in as many months, with boxes and casks beyond counting; and that these things were all being landed at Da-shu, on Portage Bay. Was he going to build a house there all by himself? Surely he would come to Yhin-da-stachy, and that would give the people much work in packing all his stuff across the trail.

Then arose visions of money—silver money—of which they had never seen many pieces beyond those they had used in hammering out their jewelry—bracelets, and labrets for the women's lips, and rings for fingers, noses, and ears.

To their easily excited minds the indications promised vast wealth and many luxuries.

But the trader was not going to Yhin-da-stachy. His plank cabin was built on Portage Bay, where better anchorage was obtainable, and because the portage would bring the trade of both sides of the peninsula and all that came from the interior by Dy-yâ.

The anticipations of the people in regard to the pecuniary advantages which would accrue to them through the establishment of the post were unrealized, but there certainly was a ready market for all their articles of trade;

and though there was just as great a dearth in silver as before, many articles of dress and food never before heard of by the people came to be known and used among them when so easily procured in exchange for their furs.

Encouraged by the bonus offered by the traders, the distribution at "pot-latch" feasts became more prodigal, while in proportion the comfort of *families* was disregarded. Jealousies grew and bitternesses strengthened. Muskets and ammunition more generally superseded the bow and arrow. Hoots-a-noo—before made by long and laborious process from native productions or from sugar and molasses, made too costly for frequent use by the difficulty in procuring them from such distances—now became an easily acquired luxury, without which the furnishings of a feast were incomplete.

Before half the winter had passed the Chilkat country became the scene of war and bloodshed. Some of the roots of the trouble we have already seen. There were others also, which, though long dormant, needed only the stimulus of alcohol to spring up and unite with the forces of later birth in causing blood to flow as water.

The trouble culminated in the village of Klok-won. Opposite tribes held different parts of the town, with heavy barricades between. Mothers and children, bound to their tribes in the strongest relation known to the Kling-get people, were held on both sides against husbands and fathers of the opposite tribe.

After the first mortal wound had been inflicted, the killing must be kept up until the loss of the opposing tribes should be equal. A man of high class was held to be worth two men of lower class, or four slaves. Any man was worth two women of the same class, and so on, even to the mutilation of an ear or a wound of any nature whatsoever. It was not only "an eye for an eye and a

tooth for a tooth," but a tooth of the same size and an eye of the same color.

It will be easily seen what an endless blood-letting such a system entails where exists such numberless shades of caste, such wild, drunken, aimless shooting, and such ideas of shame and dishonor as those holding among the Kling-gets. Insults and *suicides* in both parties still further complicated affairs by requiring a life of equal value from the tribe of him who gave the "shame."

Occasionally came a time—when hoots-a-noo ran low and the hearts of the people were weary with the long conflict—that a settlement was aimed at by cool calculation, and the voluntary offering of their own lives by men and women both.

Foreseeing the endless misery with nothing to be gained, and unwilling to touch the vile spirit which made men ready for such work, Kin-da-shon had, on the first outbreak, gone quietly to the little village of Chilkoot, where, during all the months of subsequent trouble, he remained—struggling to make good his heavy physical loss by the invention of tools fitted to his maimed hands and by the cultivation of what remained to him.

His father and his sister's husband were obliged to stand with their tribe, leaving the women and their little ones on the other side.

Shans-ga-gate was killed. His wife, overwhelmed by such a succession of troubles as had befallen her family, hung herself. This half-paid her tribe's indebtedness for the death of Shans-ga-gate, and at that moment the balance was so nearly struck that, urged by reckless grief and a desire to acquit her family, Kahs-teen rushed into the fight and demanded that her life be added to that of her mother, thus filling the measure required by her father's death

She was shot down, even where she stood, but the end was as far as ever. A high-class man in her own tribe had now been wounded, and it was uncertain what reward would be required until the result of his injury could be known.

In the mean time more hoots-a-noo must be made. A band of such men as Yealh-neddy and Goosh-ta-heen visited the trading post for a further supply of molasses.

The trader—by this time thoroughly frightened—barred his doors and fled to the loft of his house, leaving his native wife to deal with the infuriated men, who, finding themselves denied an entrance, were wild enough with the taste of fire-water and blood to burn the barred house down over its owners, for revenge and the chance of getting what they had come for.

The woman yielded; the doors were opened; with what they required the ruffians were furnished, and they went their way to manufacture that which still deeper sank the fair country in blood and ruin.

Men were found to carry the trader's message of alarm to Sitka, where lay the man-of-war in whose force was embodied that of the United States Government for Alaska; and within a reasonable time a detachment was sent to Portage Bay to bring the natives to a better understanding among themselves.

Boasting of their inland position at Klok-won, unapproachable by any boat of size, the warriors stood little in awe of any man-of-war power, and laughed to scorn the idea of a few white men intimidating them. Nevertheless, on the arrival at Klok-won of the officer in charge and his handful of men, warlike demonstrations were at once laid aside, and the fighting tribes listened with much show of respect; then, with as little delay as possi-

ble, made a promise of peace—a promise broadly including all that was asked of them.

To Sitka the peace-makers returned and declared the trouble at an end—the Chilkats at peace with themselves and the world.

'Twas immediately after the dispatching of this peace party to Chilkat that the missionaries, coming in response to the Chilkats' request, arrived at Sitka, expecting there to take a small trading boat for the country of the north. Hearing of the trouble among the people with whom they had chosen to live and labor, they wished the more earnestly to go among them at once.

Passage was engaged, when the commander of the man-of-war, with kindliest intentions, interfered, refusing to allow any further complications by the entrance of whites at such a time; and the return of the embassy was awaited with anxious interest.

When they came, their favorable report immediately removed every obstacle in the way of the missionaries, and without an hour's unnecessary delay the new workers were aboard the little boat which was to visit the post for furs.

By actual visitation of each village and the interviewing of their people, such jealousies were found to exist between their petty chiefs, and such rivalry in their desire to claim the mission, it became very clear that if the missionary were left free to act and to teach it must be in a place over which no native jurisdiction was recognized as superior to his own—a place to which persons of each and every tribe and village would have equal welcome and equal rights. This fact decided the location of the village, and Portage Bay offered advantages for the work of the missionary as well as to the trader. There a

building was soon erected, in the hope that all persons from each and every native Chilkat village who really desired better things would come and unite in building up a new village and an enlightened community, and that from this centre there might emanate influences which in time would affect the whole peninsula. From this central station, too, the missionary would make visiting and teaching tours among the different settlements, extending and not disturbing the regular work at the mission village.

On the earliest possible day after getting into their new and unfinished home, the missionaries set out together to make the initiatory of these tours, receiving at every place warm welcomes and the sincerest hospitality. Beginning at Yhin-da-stachy, a night and a day were spent there, and the same at Kutwulhtoo, holding public meetings at each place, then proceeding to Klok-won, where such serious work was found that even this first visit was a prolonged one.

Runners had taken to Klok-won news of the missionary's coming. As his party left Kutwulhtoo return messengers came, saying that the people did not wish to see the strangers; they were in blood and in heaviness of heart. Their shame also weighed them down to the earth. They could not look up to the faces of new friends, and they were not ready to hear of their God. They must first have satisfaction and an end of this trouble among themselves, they said; and they had now but ceased fighting long enough to burn their dead. Even now they were returning, the messengers said, from this duty, and were loading their guns for further warfare.

On receiving this message the missionary urged his oarsmen to redouble their speed, and at this point that became possible, with the greater depth of water. The

village of Klok-won was reached before the fighting had been resumed.

On every hand throughout the village were seen the sad and terrible evidences of the conflict. On the fronts of the houses—over their thresholds, often, marking the spot where fell the slain—hung mementoes of the dead. Snow-shoes, knives, moccasins, and other articles of dress; and above them were the hastily-constructed receptacles for the bones and ashes of those who once had used these things.

Everywhere were found death and desolation, wailing and cursing, darkened homes and fireless hearths. The finely-colored and costly carvings—household gods of many generations, whose massive strength supported the heavy arches of many houses in the village—were closely veiled with coverings of native straw-matting. The wounded lay among their tribal friends. No wife nursed a husband, nor any daughter her father—stoics, in suffering unrelieved.

Nowhere appeared the ordinary vocations of domestic life. No busy every-day work, no cooking of food nor making of garments. A pall hung over the once busy, thriving town.

In the house of the medicine-man—himself solitary priest among his demons—were exposed hundreds of his "utties"—carved charms of bone, wood, and shell, hung on long lines crossing and recrossing the room. From the corners of the house also peered horrid heads and masks—heads with red eyes to wink and snake-like, fiery tongues to thrust out and in by sinew springs. Head-dresses and girdles of many materials and various styles had place in the collection. Indeed, every tool and token of his trade was there.

The medicine-man was known also to visit now, with

sacrifices, the great altar outside the village, which for one unclothed with power like his was death to approach. It was truly a harvest-time to this emissary of evil, who, by every artifice and device, kept the people in a state of abject slavery to himself.

On leaving their canoe the missionaries were met by the steward of a rich old chief, who bore with true dignity the distinction of being highest in rank of all the Chilkat people. Yet, strange to say, this chief was in nowise involved in the war; but, alone in his high caste, he maintained a position so neutral that he could confer with either side while attempting to control neither.

This chief's servant was sent to meet the missionaries and to say that it would please his master to have the visitors come to his house. On accepting his invitation, every kindness, both delicate and substantial, was shown them.

An adjoining ancestral house, built in honor of deceased relatives and kept as a guest-house, filled with oddest dishes and quaintest carv' gs, was opened to the strangers as a more retired lodging-place than the already well-filled dwelling of the chief; and stores of fish, mountain sheep, berries, sugar, and even a little fine flour were brought for the use of the guests.

Bales of snowy blankets—soft as down—were opened and spread on the floor for those whom this "savage" was pleased to honor.

He urged them also to make their stay longer than they had arranged for, saying that the people would not fight while the missionary remained. His stores would hold out, he said, if those of the strangers should fail with the tarrying.

He gave permission also for the calling of a meeting in the great lodging-house—a meeting of the largest tribe,

whose caste was higher than that of the tribe they were fighting. He sent his servants to bid them come and hear the message which the man of God had brought them.

They came in a mass. It was a congregation to thrill the heart of one bearing the message of peace and love—of *peace* to a suffering, struggling world—peace to *Chilkat*, torn and bleeding as she was—of *love* from a God who "so loved the world"—the world which struggled in enmity against him—so loved that he *gave*—not *took* from them all they had, to pay the "shame" they gave him, but after they had done all against him—he *gave* his only begotten and well-beloved *Son*, that they might *not perish* but have *everlasting life*. This mighty *love*, the missionary told them, was given to the Chilkat people, not to one tribe only, but to *all* tribes. Would they receive it? Would they *obey* it, that they might *live* by it in peace, and forever?

Hungry, despairing eyes were filled with wonder. Such a message to such a people, with whom no effort of the imagination had ever produced any power greater than their own which was not a malignant, scourging power! *Even them this God so loved!* Would they forgive each other as God was willing, as God was *longing*, to forgive them? That was the question. To be *received* his love must be *obeyed*.

Hard faces softened, dull faces kindled. Their hearts had been touched. The Chilkat war was at an end.

When the message had been given and prayer had been made, a silence fell upon the house. Then, one after another, the leading men, out of the fulness of their hearts, spoke.

With wondering gratitude they accepted this token from the great God that they had been interrupted in their work of self-destruction as a people.

They rehearsed the story of their troubles, acknowledged the power for evil that hoots-a-noo had been among them; and they told with perfect frankness how little they had meant by the promise of peace given to the "men of war." It was an easy and quick way of getting them out of the country, that their own plans might work out unhindered.

"But, missionary chief," one speaker said, "*this* is what the Kling-gets do when they *make* peace: The head men of the fighting tribes exchange homes. They go into each other's houses as its honored, trusted guest. They eat and sleep, unarmed and unsuspicious, in that house among their old-time enemies, proving thus their own sincerity.

"For a week they live so, and the barricades are taken down, the carvings are uncovered, and all things rejoice together when the people, reconciled, feast and sing as friends.

"Has this been done here? You see the answer for yourself. We were this morning as far from the end as from the beginning.

"But now it is different. This God of yours takes the taste of blood out of our mouths and makes us see that we are brothers. If he wants us to have peace we will make peace in truth. We will take our enemies' head man into our chief's place. He shall eat of our food and sleep by our side." This was the new spirit of the larger tribe.

Then the weaker, the broken, bitter, and resentful remnant of the other tribe was visited, beyond the barricade. Guided to the house of the chief, the largest house in that part of the village, the missionaries went to ask permission to hold there such a meeting as had been held on the other side.

On approaching the house, their attention was called to the worm-eaten appearance of the heavy plank walls—caused, they were told, by the bullets and lead slugs shot by the enemy having been picked out again to shoot back.

A few feet from the steps which led up to the house door was pointed out the spot where the chief's mother had fallen—shot at her own request, after one of her sons (whose life had been demanded for the honor of his tribe) had escaped to the interior. At the foot of the steps the ground had been saturated with the blood of his sister, who, with her nursing babe in her bosom, had taken her place and *demanded* that her life be taken with her mother's, as the full equivalent of her coward brother's life; and so the honor of their house was preserved.

At the top of the steps a dark stain and a hundred bullet-holes showed where the chieftain brother had met his end.

Entering, the great house seemed at first to be unoccupied, 'twas so dark and hollow; but, on growing more accustomed to the gloom, they saw, sitting on the edge of the fireless, wreck-strewn hearth, the emaciated form of a man, with head buried between his knees, his thin hands clasped over it, so lost in his own dark musings he had not noticed the entrance of any one.

The touch of a brother's hand, with strong, kindly, sympathizing words, caused him to raise his hopeless face for one glance. His expression was one which once seen long haunts the soul of him who sees it. He could not have been above nineteen or twenty years of age, yet he had lived to see every member of his family destroyed. He alone was left—the head of a tribe which saw before it nothing but blood and final extinction as a result of this war; for even such entire defeat were less shameful than giving it up while a man was left.

With no stirring of spirit the young chief gave his consent to having the people brought together in his house. They came and heard the words which fit every need. There were tears, and a relaxing of stern, hard-pressed souls. Then the young chief himself spoke, thanking the bearer of God's peace for coming to them with the word of life—with the offer of a life worth having. His own life, he said, he had found too heavy to carry. Having lost all that made life dear, being utterly hopeless as to any brighter future, he was saying good-by to himself when the minister touched his hand. He had determined to make an end of such living, and, with the weapon which was to accomplish his release, he had taken his seat on the desolate hearth of his fathers, ready for the deed. But he had felt the touch of a strong brother. He had heard words which made his dead heart live again. He was saved!

They would indeed agree to this true peace-making.

And so the peace was made. And there followed feasting and fellowship in which was no sign of bitterness, though, in the reuniting of families, in the *homeing* again of husbands and wives and children, there must have been many sorely sad hearts over the places made vacant by the twin demons, *drink* and *war*.

After returning to their station, the missionaries visited the village Chilkoot, and as a result of this first touring many of the people in all the villages were brought into sympathy with the work, with the workers, and with each other; so that, leaving their native places, they gathered to the settlement on Portage Bay where they could have the advantages of regular school and church.

Kin-da-shon was among the first to identify himself with the new community. Though so maimed in hands and feet, there was no man so busy as he in all the Chilkat

country. In stormy weather, and when his feet were too painful to allow him to be about much, he sat at his silver work, always patient, never complaining; he often carried his carving to the school-room, where he worked while studying. In good weather he worked out of doors at canoe-hewing and many other things; his industry and energy never flagged.

With his steady growth in the knowledge of God there was a corresponding *love* of God—a *oneness* of will with the will of God—a growth of grace and of peace which showed more and more plainly in his fine face, and which, in his *life*, was an open book.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### LITTLE "CHUB" CH-ONE.

"CHUB wants to see missionary — Chub *must* go. Somebody calls Chub's spirit, but Chub can't go till he hears the big bell and hears God's talk. Take Chub quick; something pulls Chub too hard here—it hurts Chub"—putting his poor little hands on his breast.

From day to day Ch-one's plea and the plaint came alike. At night it varied a little.

"To-morrow—ah clah, *to-morrow*—take Chub to see missionary; Chub *must* go." And on a half-promise, which was still unkept by those who made it, the little one would fall to sleep, only to awake with the same cry on his lips.

It would have been difficult to find anything so hard for his parents to grant as this request of Ch-one to go to the missionary. Already it had become very evident that his work was at war with the work of the medicine-spirits. Already the effect was being felt in the falling off of their gains. Nearly all of the village of Yhin-da-stachy had gone to the mission at Portage Bay. They were being taught that much of their sickness was due to the breaking of laws which had been given by the God who made all life. These laws the people were being taught, and the sick were not treated as though "witched," but were given medicines and nourishing food.

In many cases such patients as had been by their friends expected to die came back to health and strength, and every such case was of course a substantial loss to

the medicine-men, not only in the returns which each individual case would have brought them, but also in the growing infidelity regarding their power which each recovery under the missionary's treatment was fostering.

Ka-kee meant to stay away and do what he could to turn the tide which had set in toward the missionary. Whispers and vague, mysterious hints were kept flying hither and thither as to the missionary's witchcraft, and what would sooner or later befall the people who listened to him.

Much of the "new way" had been reported in the house of the medicine-man and talked over between Ka-kee and his wife and those who had heard of the true God, through the mission—talked over in such a spirit as had caused Ka-kee to harden his heart yet more and to resist all influences of the Gospel.

To little Ch-one, sitting silently in his corner of the hearth, unnoticed by "the wise and prudent," who never dreamed of his noticing or understanding their conversation, had come, through their words, whisperings of a wisdom above this world; and a longing to see and hear more of this wonderful life and love and God took possession of his being. Never before had he seemed to care much, or long at a time, for anything, and they thought he would forget this; but days and weeks had not altered his pleading.

"Take me—*ish, ah clah;* Chub must go. Chub wants to go to the house where they tell about God. Chub will die—take him quick."

At last, convinced that he was indeed dying with this last desire unheeded, they packed up such little stores as might be necessary for a few weeks, and taking Chub they set sail one bright, early winter day to make the thirty-mile trip around the peninsula.

Along the whole length of the journey he lay silent and almost motionless. One might have thought him sleeping, but Tashekah—whom he could never bear to have out of his sight—sat holding his head in her lap and saw that his eyes were often lifted to the sky—that the little thin hands were folded together while the lips moved as though he spoke.

As the day wore on and it was said they were almost there, he laid one little hand on Tashekah's and said:

"Tell me, Tashekah, tell Chub when you see the house."

A few minutes later the last point was passed. The mission with its belfry stood out high and clear in the glory of the setting sun, and, stretching away to the right, along the gray and purple beach, lay the native village nestling in the shadows of the pines.

"There is the house."

"Lift me up, Tashekah," cried the child, now trembling with excitement. "Let Chub see the place of God."

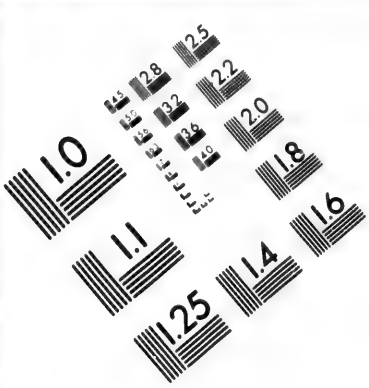
His head was raised against her breast, and, with his tiny hands tensely clasped, the child fixed his gaze upon the poor buildings so gilded and glorified to his vision.

The missionary had heard of his coming, and went down with the evening into the little village to carry such good things as were found for the sick; best of all, the words of life for hearts weary and sick unto death.

The soulful eyes of Chub were raised to the loving, pitying face above him, while his hands were folded in a warm, strong clasp. Sitting thus by the child, very tenderly the messenger led his thought; and very plain was made the way for Christ's little ones coming home.

Next morning—the Sabbath—dawned clear and still. Out on the early breeze floated the bright folds of the

"MOVING ALONG THE SNOW-COVERED PATH . . . UP TO THE LITTLE CHAPEL ON THE HILL."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large mission flag, the signal to all passing canoes that the day of rest had come, when the "church house" would be filled with music, the words of God to men, and the voice of prayer from man to God.

Very beautiful was the scene: a new robe of snow had fallen during the night—which gave not so much the idea of cold as of purity. The tall rich grasses waved their brown heads above it, and the taller ferns bowed in grace. From the booths and huts of the hastily constructed village arose the blue smoke curling close against the dark greens of the forest; while immediately in front of the village the clear mirror of the bay gave back again the inverted picture.

As voice to the living scene, the sweet, heavy tones of the mission bell fell with the certain sound of "peace on earth, good-will to men."

At its first vibration the waiting people began to emerge from their little homes, moving along the snow-covered path, among the ferns and rushes, up to the little chapel on the hill. The colors of their kerchiefs and their blankets—red, orange, and purple—gave the last touch of beauty to the scene, as was the response of the people to the call to prayer the filling in of its spirit.

The morning had found Chub very, very weak; he had not spoken, but refused silently the proffered food, and lay, as he had lain the day before, almost without moving. At the sound of the bell his eyes opened wonderingly; then:

"Take Chub," came in feeble, pleading tones.

Looking into each other's faces the father and mother shook their heads. Chub did not notice them. In a few moments his expression changed before their wondering eyes, a far-away look fell on the face of the child—a look which presently brightened into one of inexpressible

joy and peace, and from his white lips came the words: "Ah—ah—God's house—Chub comes."

The beautiful eyes were closed, and over the poor little hands and feet were drawn warm coverings of wool. They hung around his neck their charms and paints, they laid around and about the little dead body all that their love and their possessions could give, and it was then ready for the burning.

A handful of ashes, a little box of bones, and a void in the hearts of those who loved him were all that remained of little Ch-one. Yet no! Eternity may show far more than these.

An eventful year passed at the mission village. The winter was one of unprecedented storm and consequent suffering to the people in their open, hastily-built huts; for, provident people that they were, they would not leave their fishing and curing and oil-making and berry-preserving until their store-houses were filled against the winter's need.

They seemed to think that with so much comfort for the stomach, and with the school for mind and heart, small provision would be necessary as to shelter.

The storms came early and with such violence that even the natives themselves were housed for weeks unable to go to their old villages for supplies they greatly needed. When afterward a lull came and they went to get the food they had so laboriously prepared and so carefully housed, it was found that their houses had been broken open and the food was gone—stolen.

Many weeks of privation and suffering followed, during which the *main*, and to many the *only*, article of diet was the little black mussel found at low tide on the rocky beach.

A terrible epidemic broke out among the people; many died. Many, whose superstitious minds were wrought upon by the prophecies and curses of the medicine-men, gave to these birds of evil even their last blanket, that the spirits might forgive them the welcome they had given the missionaries. That was the cause, these prophets said, of all the evil which had befallen the people.

Others, seeing how many of the sick recovered when tended and fed by the missionary, while nearly all whom the medicine-men danced over *died*, held to the teachers, and the mission house was filled daily from morning till night with the sick and suffering, who in many cases were carried by their friends for treatment. Often through the night was heard the call at the window: "Come! oh, come quick! my husband is dying;" or, "my child;" or, "my wife." Calls which were always promptly answered.

Thus were formed two growing elements—the grateful love of the people toward their new friends and the mischief-working hatred of the medicine-men and their enslaved followers who feared to *not* follow them. When sickness had increased the medicine-men had appeared as birds of prey, coming from the other villages. The missionares were charged with witchcraft and were both publicly and privately warned that if any of their patients should die they should give *life* for *life*, which threat made no change in their manner of working among the people.

Time after time was their school emptied by the threats and assertions made to the villagers by these false and wicked men, though it was soon filled again by the hungry, knowledge-loving people whose superstitions were strong as life.

Spring came at last, bringing light and food and health, and, to a great extent, freedom from the troubles of the

long winter. Many of the people returned to their old homes for the summer, intending before another winter to put up comfortable log houses at the mission village. Ka-kee left with his family among the first; but the mission seemed to possess a strange fascination for him, and very, very often his peculiar, stealthy, creeping step was seen—not heard—as he haunted the place. When he thought no one noticed, he would crouch by the low window and study the interior of the rooms, but no earthly power could induce him to enter the place until—

There was a baby at the mission, "the sweet snow baby" she was called by the natives, who idolized her. She had a smile and a "picked-off" kiss, given with tiny thumb and finger, for every one who approached her, and all her baby words were in the language of her dark friends. It was the *baby* who drew him in!

Many times, from an adjoining room, the mother, at hearing her baby tap on the window-pane, with the accompanying invitation "Hah-goo" (Come to me), had peeped in to see the tiny hands extended, beckoning to the wild-looking creature outside. One day, having not noticed for a longer time than usual, on going in to see what baby might be playing, the mother's heart stood still for a moment at the sight which met her eyes. So noiselessly had he stolen into the house, no sound had reached her ears; but there on the floor lay the medicine-man, asleep: and on a marmot robe beside him, unsoiled by any touch, lay the fair, sweet babe, asleep also! And so she won him. After that day he came often, and as often he heard the words of life.

Another winter he did not come to the mission. But Kunz, having gotten a taste of learning, could not give it up; all the way from Yhin-da-stachy he came to school and to church, though not regularly, for his father was hav-

ing hemorrhages, and Kunz was the man of the house in the matter of fuel and fires. Even Tashekah was sometimes allowed to come.

As the spring came on Ka-kee's long-abused body wasted very rapidly. Again and again he asked for the missionaries, and when they went to him his cry was for medicine for body and soul.

"I am dying—give me medicine—I want to see God," he said.

One day at church the subject had been: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." Poor Kunz was deeply touched. After the meeting, though the evening shadows were gathering, and the long, lonely tramp through forest and field lay before him ere he could be safely housed, he lingered behind all others to speak with the missionary.

"Oh! good, kind friend, my poor, poor father is dying," Kunz said; "give me the medicine that will 'cut it off'—his sins."

Very lovingly and patiently the missionary explained to him again the simple way of salvation—the meaning of repentance, of love, and forgiveness. Then, with a heart so filled with holy things that he seemed never to think of the forest goblins, Kunz went home to his father.

Not many days after came the message: "Ka-kee is dead." He had had many talks with Kunz and had himself prayed. He died without watchers in the silence of the night. In the morning they found him with his cold hands clasped upon a little book; it was the New Testament.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### ON THE STREET-SITKA.

"THERE goes 'drunken Luce' again. Strange, whether howling drunk or sullenly sober, she has always that child by the hand, isn't it?"

"Who is she, anyway? Belong to Sitka?"

"I don't know; seems to me I've heard she came from the north somewhere; but I've seen her about here ever since I came to the country, two years this fall, and I tell you there's been an awful change in her since then."

"How?"

"If you *mean* 'how,' I imagine that's considerable of a story; but if you want to know what the change is, I can tell you in a few words. She was the best-looking native girl I ever saw—not like the common slouches you see every day, but with a step that meant something; neat and clean; and her face—why, you would never think of its being the same! She had the child with her then, just as she has him now; that's the only thing that *hasn't* changed about her."

"What's the matter? Gone to the bad?"

"Well, yes; I rather think she has. It would be hard to find a worse case than she is and has been for many a day. She'll wink out in a spree some of these times—before long, too. Did you notice her eyes and the color of her face? It's there, sure as death itself."

"Is she never sober?"

"Never, I believe, when she can get anything to drink—and there's no lack of moisture in Alaska. There's an

awful leak between prohibitory law and high license; with rogues to guard the bunghole there's enough *spilled* to bring all the natives of Alaska to the gutter. Pity, too. They'd rather *work*—if there's *money* in it."

"That's peculiar. But this 'Luce.' I'd rather like to hear her story; do you know it?"

"Only what I've seen since coming here. She was living at first with a white man called Bill, in that cabin over there. And you might go a long ways and find no neater place than that was. She behaved like a decent woman and went about very little.

"But she always had a terrible sadness about her, and a look in her eyes that—you needn't laugh, Jim, but if you could imagine your sister looking like that, it would make you cry, man of the world as you think yourself.

"Well, of course the man she lived with was a worthless scamp, and before many months he skipped the country and left her with two children to keep instead of one, and not a dollar to live on. I never saw her drunk before that. But she had to leave the cabin; what things she had went to pay the rent; and she went, as poor as she was born, into the ranch. For a while she went around like the ghost of a person starved to death. I declare it was a positive relief to see her drunk at last.

"There are always plenty of chances—such as they are—for a native woman to make a living in these towns; but with most of them it's not long they *need* anything to live on after they *take* the chance.

"Luce must have taken hers then, and she's gone from dance-house to hovel and from drunken rows to the lock-up ever since. She's thoroughly *bad*, and yet—that child—I don't understand it. The *baby* died, but that child is always with her. Funny, don't you think so?"

"Don't like the story. Have a cigar, and walk me to

Indian River. I'll dare you to do it before the Chinaman's gong. Done?"

"The marshal has poor Luce again, mother; three times in a week—can *nothing* be done to help her?"

"That woman is a mystery to me," answered the missionary's wife. "I can make nothing of her at all. When she's drunk, as she usually is, it seems useless to speak to her; and when she's not drunk she is so stubbornly silent and sullen that it is just as hard to know what to do. I've been wondering myself how she could be reached; it seems such a hopeless work among those women; they run such a headlong race."

'Twas evening of the second day after Luce's arrest that very unceremoniously the door of the missionary's house was opened, and Luce, wild-eyed, haggard, and despairing, asked:

"Where is the man who knows God? Quick!"

"The missionary, you mean? I will tell him." And in a few moments the minister stood, kindly asking: "What is it, Luce?"

Not waiting for his question or greeting, the woman had begun to speak, with her breath coming in gasps and her hand held tight above her heart as if to hold it still.

"Me baby," speaking in such English as she had picked up, "*sick*. You God-man make him no die: come quick!"

"Your little boy is sick? How many days sick?"

"One day—*come!*"

"But where is he sick? I must know something about it to give medicine."

"He head crazy; come—you *see*—quick!"

Without further delay the missionary followed her to one of the most miserable houses of the village, and there,

in one corner, wrapped in the mother's poor old shawl, was the child—the idol of her heart—lying quietly, with heavy, labored breath, with flushed face and wide, unseeing eyes.

"A very sick child," the missionary said to himself, as he examined pulse and temperature. "Poor woman!" he added aloud as Luce took her boy into her arms and sat looking from his face to that of the minister.

"He no die?" she asked at length with her heart in her hungry eyes.

"I cannot tell—I hope not. How did he get sick?"

Her eyes fell, her face dropped low on her breast above the child, while a crimson flush took the place for a moment of its awful pallor, leaving it then more ghastly than before.

"Tell me about it," the kindly voice urged; "I may know better what to do for him. How did he get sick?"

"In lock-up."

"How was that? Was he cold there?"

"He cold there—he wet first, and one night all dark—no fire—he shake."

"I see. I will go get what may make him better; we will try it."

Returning later with such remedies and comforts as seemed to be required, the missionary himself stayed to administer them. And Luce, though she had slept none for two nights, sat watching him with eyes which seemed unable to close.

Several hours passed before any change was noticeable in the little patient's condition, then a slight moisture dimmed the glistening forehead and the breath came more softly. Gradually the eyelids drooped, without the quiver; and natural sleep held him in her safe embrace.

"Your child is better; it is good sleep now. When he wakes his head will be all right, I think," the missionary said.

The woman looked at him—looked at the child. An indescribable expression passed over her face; then, reaching out, she rearranged the old blanket on the floor, laid the child on it, and covered him tenderly with her faded shawl. This done, she went to another part of the room, and sitting down, buried her face in her hands, sobbing and crying and writhing in a tempest of emotion.

Anxious beyond expression to give to the poor creature the help she needed, yet fearful of making a mistake in his choice of words, the minister sat still by the child, silently praying for direction.

When her passion had at last spent itself she arose and went to the good man's side. Kneeling there, she lightly touched his arm, and with the tears still streaming down her cheeks she said:

"Me baby—you good God-man make him no die. He head crazy—you make sleep good. *Me—me bad*—me very bad—allee same crazy *heart*. Too hard my heart—too big *stone*, *heavy* too—can't carry me sometimes.

"White man give whiskey, 'no heavy,' he say; too much lie—too much *bad*—white man. One stone heavy my heart—one whiskey—then *three* stone heavy *me*.

"Now long time me don't care. Me heart *all* stone. Just now me baby get well—me heart all break, it all mix up bad, stone, sorry. You God see it—everything! You God strong maybe—maybe—" and she clutched the arm in her eagerness—"maybe you God make *me well heart*."

With a joy which found expression in silent thanksgiving for such a call to preach the free and blessed Gospel, the minister led this poor, defiled, and broken heart

to the Fountain opened for cleansing and for the healing of the nations.

By degrees he gathered something of her story since coming to Sitka. Of her previous life she only said:

"In Chilkat me no bad—me husband very good—but plenty trouble, me—no more live Chilkat."

Coming to Sitka, in her simplicity she had supposed that the people lived altogether as they did in Chilkat, and that she would be welcome to a place by the fireside of her friends, with the privileges of helping to secure and prepare stores of food for winter and of then sharing in their use.

But her friends were of those who no longer lived honestly earning bread by the sweat of their brow. They had money—ill-gotten—and with it bought what they fancied at the traders'. They told her how she could do the same, and when she refused they turned her out. Homeless and not knowing what to do, she had wandered about the town until, weary and heart-sick and her child crying with hunger, she sat down in a lonely place, wishing they might die together.

While she so sat "Bill" had come and made a proposal, which, according to the only law of marriage she had ever known, was honorable and fair: "He would give her fifty dollars if she would be his wife."

The husband of her love, who was her husband no more forever, had given more than three times that sum, but she could not expect that now. "They would live in a little house of their own," he said, "where she could have all the food she wanted for herself and the child—and clothing, too. Winter was coming on: by whose fire would she warm or feed her babe?"

Too sick at heart to care for anything else than her child, she accepted his offer. More than the amount he

gave her was claimed by the friends who had brought her with them from Chilkat: she had nothing to lay by.

When he threw her off—poor, sick, hopeless, friendless, and ignorant of the world she had fallen into—her ruin had been sure and rapid. And now she knew it herself—death was at her door. But, blessed thought! *life* also was near; and she was entering in.

About a week later a messenger came—the child himself, it was.

"Mother can't get up," he said; "will the minister come?"

There was only time, after getting there, to give the assurance that "her baby" should be taken into the mission home and taught the better things. Then she folded her one earthly treasure—her beloved boy—to her bosom in a long, last embrace, crying in their own familiar tongue:

"Kah-hlid-zeen, my heart's child, forget *never* that *your mother* was *Kin-da-shon's wife!*"

And it was by this, in after-years, that Kin-da-shon, visiting the Sitka Mission School, found, half-grown, manly, and intelligent, his long-lost and only son.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CLOSING GLIMPSES.

HOW she had heard of the city of refuge, it would have been hard to discover; but to the missionary's place came Usha-shawet, a gray, shrivelled, stooping, creeping creature, who talked in whispers to herself and seemed to inhabit a world entirely her own.

She came to the church services, sometimes appearing to hear what was said, and again chattering to herself as though conscious of no other presence.

She interfered with no one—found her own food, sometimes sat or slept by friendly village fires, but *oftener* no one knew where.

In one of the village houses there was a little cripple from an affection of the spine, caused by her mother's own carelessness, but who her friends persistently declared to have been bewitched. It was during an absence of the missionary that old Usha was seized, bound, and flogged within an inch of her life on the charge of being this troublesome witch. Nine days, without food or water, had she been in this torment before the missionary returned, and her release was had. Utterly nude she lay on her bed of devil-sticks, too weak to struggle. Her speechless tongue hung from her mouth, black and swollen.

She was released, moved to comfortable quarters, and bathed. The power of swallowing was gone, but drop by drop nourishment enough reached the life-channels

to revive her, and after a time she got about again and became one of the common grannies of the village.

"Usha," the missionary asked her, "what made you say that you were a witch when they asked you?"

"It is true," the old creature said in her queer, absent way, her weak eyes watering; "the bad spirits they got Usha. Bad spirits talk to Usha—they take Usha to medicine-man's dead-house; Usha get plenty bad medicine there for everybody. Usha flies high over all the houses—nobody catch Usha. She walks far on the water and she don't sink. Big, strong devil; Usha has strong devil inside, too. Usha's spirit makes many little men and women sick. It's good if Kling-gets kill devil spirits." Then, sitting down, she began to pluck the grass and leaves, speaking to them as to children, apparently forgetting that any one else was with her.

Usha was thenceforth allowed to remain or go about the country unhindered, while a number of others, rescued in a similar way from conditions of torture as great as hers, were made outcasts from home and friends.

During a later absence of the missionary, six adults, accused of witchcraft, were tortured and killed during one winter. Among them was the grandmother of Tashekah.

When Tashekah was no longer bound to the family of Ka-kee she followed her heart to the mission: her quick, hungry mind feasted on what she found there, and she became proficient, too, in many of the simple accomplishments which go to make a happy home.

She was the same Tashekah, yet not the same. Sweet and even she was by nature, but mental and spiritual growth had developed and ripened a character of priceless worth.

He who now sought her for his own true mate had, through a long, hard road, gained *faith* and *light* and

*peace*, and now followed *joy* — the satisfying of a pure heart.

"I want my new house only just big enough for Tashekah and me," he had said to the missionary in building the pretty nest which was so greatly to differ from the many-family shelters of old. "I want to hold her so close that no evil may be able to fall between us."

'Twas the first Christian marriage in the tribe—the first establishing of a two-one *home*, where the true God was held in loving reverence, and where at morn and eve the man with his wife knelt in prayer and praise together.

And the next year when, on a sweet Sabbath morning, they brought their baby daughter—pretty she was as Kotch-kul-ah herself—and together stood presenting her for baptism, the fulness of the benediction seemed to have fallen on Kin-da-shon and his wife.

THE END.